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THE
MODERN PEDAGOGUE;

OR,
RUSTIC REMINISCENCES.

By J. RHYS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.



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HARGIS

INTRODUCTION.

MANY of England's rural customs, with which have been associated the romantic charm and magic spell, since the innovation of railways, an improved education, and a rapidly advancing refinement, are fast dying out; and it does not require the supernatural powers of the seer to foretell that ere long the English countryman and his customs, as they once existed, will be thought and spoken of, as of the past; he and his having given place to a different but more improved modernism.

In the following reminiscences, the author's aim has not been so much to bring out, and fully develope, one or more characters or characteristics that may or may not have existed in the genus *Homo*, as more particularly to introduce, for a

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little moment, many and varied types of such as may yet be found in our beloved England ; and trusting the same may not only prove interesting and amusing ; but in some degree instructive likewise, leave the sketches in the hands of the benevolent reader.

LONDON, 1867.

THE MODERN PEDAGOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

"I praise a school, as Pope a government,
So take my judgment in his language dress'd :
Whate'er is best administered is best."

Cowper.

"BOB, you shall go to school," said his sire one day, after some little puerile delinquency. "You shall go to school I say boy; and we'll see if they can't teach you many things you ought to know."

In this manner it was, that that young urchin's mind gradually unfolded to the fact of there existing such an institution as a school, and which Bob had, in consequence, depicted as a jail, reformatory, or some other similar institution where bad boys were tortured into good ones, and which, as a natural result, he intended avoiding as long as possible.

Bob's sire lived in Wales ; it matters not whether North or South ; both are alike picturesque, both romantic, both excellent for fine scenery, both celebrated for coal, iron, and copper ; both peoples too, naturally talented ; fond of music, poetry, pulpit oratory, and song ; both loyal, likewise, since the time of Edward I., who tricked them into a baby prince at Carnarvon,—a joke which they pocketed, and continued good subjects always ; both hospitable, vain of pedigree, sentimental, and ambitious of the English language.

Bob's father lived in a retired glen ; prided himself in being one-eighth a Welshman, in having descended from the Welsh princes, in being perfectly learned in his pedigree, and jealous of the same ; and here he had retired, in order to enjoy Welsh scenery, Welsh mutton, Welsh economy, and leeks.

Here Bob too, disported himself, as the goats and kids upon the mountains, in the happiest state of unrestrained freedom ; roaming in search of the sparrow-hawk's nest, rabbit burrow, catching the spotted trout ; or, more business bent, mounting his shaggy pony, scoured hill and dale in search of the goats and ewes, considering each black lamb his own perquisite ; and often sighing for Jacob's, or some other trick, that would

induce the latter to cast more of the sable innocents.

Bob possessed poultry likewise of every breed ; from the ducks of the Muscovite, to those of Aylesbury ; and fowls of Spain, Holland, Cochin China, and Dorking were his ; and, as for rabbits and pigeons, no boy was so renowned as he. But other occupations and amusements must now be found for the boy, for he must not only be Anakim in body, but the mind likewise must possess a portion of that quality.

“So you shall go to school, Bob,” said his sire ; “and we’ll see if they can succeed in multiplying some ideas of worth, and subtracting others of no importance.”

But Bob had not only pictured the school in the unfavourable light, as already seen, but the master likewise ; whom he considered the very knight of canes, sticks, and rods, and other instruments of torture, exceeded only by the infamous Spanish Inquisition,—a man alike destitute of kindness and sympathy ; the one to correct his delinquencies with studied exactness, and to put a full-stop to all his frolics and gambols ; for whenever had an accident happened, or a misfortune occurred, when he had not been threatened with the pedagogue ?

Bob, indeed, had really magnified the improver

of the understanding into some stalwart giant of punishment, who loved it for its own sake, and whom he intended, if possible, to escape. But Bob might be easily excused for having argued thus, when it is remembered that poets, painters, authors, all have done their best in fostering such ideas ; who, when in want of a subject for their ridicule, have looked round, and pounced at once on old pedagogue as the very right defenceless object,—consequently, he has become the butt of their sarcasm, paint, and wit. Thus, one depicts him a gluttonous man and winebibber, fallen to sleep one warm afternoon in summer, surrounded by his sharp-eyed youngsters, who make sport of him, during his submission to Morpheus : there stands one, rod in hand, emblem of fallen greatness ; another is thrusting his round little head into the fool's cap, in mockery of that capital punishment ; another shouldering the bellows, in imitation of the old gentleman's performance on the violoncello ; and lastly, another, more daring than the rest, is about to give his wig a decided tug. Alas ! thou monarch of absolute authority, that thou shouldst ever become the butt of thy vantage-loving subjects ! Again is painted the village school in an uproar, where, it may be presumed, a friend has called in, and taken the master a little moment

from his pupils to the "Waggon and Horses," in order to test the celebrated ale of old John Huggins; and here again is depicted a regular juvenile disturbance. One sarcastically writes—

"O ye who teach the generous youth of nations,
France, Holland, Germany, and Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions;
It mends their morals—never mind the pain."

Another—

"If, shrewd and of a well-constructed brain,
Your son comes forth a prodigy of skill,
As, wheresoever taught, so framed he will,—
The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share."

Another—

"Lands he could measure and the tides presage,
And even the story ran, that he could gauge:
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And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew."

Another has represented the schoolmaster as a being whose greatest delight consisted in inflicting punishment either in, or on the body of his spiritless pupils, and states that in some denominated schools, on certain days of the week, very early in the morning, the poor victims were obliged and compelled to swallow potions of brimstone-and-treacle, thrust down their rejecting throats with wooden spoons; this, in addition to

semi-starvation and copious flagellations, (according to this authority,) constituted the only fare to be obtained in these so-called schools. O ye revilers of the improver of the understanding! I fear some of you were very indifferent boys at school,—I do fear it.

How, then, can he, who has taken such an individual for his subject, expect to gain attention?

The soldier, describing the scenes of his necessarily romantic life,—the perilous march, harassing night-watch, and daring charge,—would not fail to interest the reader. The sailor, recounting his experience upon the sublime but often eccentric ocean,—the storm, the wreck, the barque tossed as a scroll upon the angry billows, with his ultimate deliverance,—would likewise command attention. Or yon indefatigable traveller, returned from some before untrodden shores,—relating his hungers, thirsts, colds, heats, with hair-breadth escapes; from disease, the wild denizens of the forest, or from his fellow-man, more to be dreaded than they,—would prove highly entertaining. But what novelty can there be in the story of a pedagogue? As well impose upon us say you the history of the unfortunate tradesman striving and toiling with the world and its difficulties, ever and anon gaining a momentary ascendancy over the same, but

as speedily cast down and vanquished. As well give us, you repeat, the tale of some wretched needlewoman, who knoweth no rest by day, and whose candle goeth not out by night, and whose artistic value is too often paid by semi-starvation, disease, and premature death. Or as well endeavour to interest by the life of the pallid artist, sitting from week to week, and month to month, over his stretched canvas in yon secluded attic, abstracted alike in mind and body from the pleasures, excitements, and passing events of the busy world; and whose works, perhaps, will not be properly acknowledged until he himself has passed away.

Well reader, would they speak out, doubtless they could interest,—not, perhaps, by vaunting one bold stroke and laurels won, not one grand *coup de main* and enemies vanquished, not one contested field, and that crowned with victory and posthumous fame; but a daily, hourly heroism, a protracted, patient warfare against numerous opposing forces; in the shape of poverty, neglected worth, false friends, and a host of the same category.

Thus then, we see the unenviable light in which the schoolmaster has been held in days past, by men of superior talent and intellect. Happily, however, for him and his pupils, he is not the

bugbear as of yore ; but parents wiser in their generation, see the policy of predisposing the child in favour of the man from whom they expect him to gain that knowledge, for which they have to recompense the dispenser. Physical force too, is generally not adopted ; the appeal is not so much made to the back or hand, as in times that have gone, but more particularly to the intellectual faculties of the child, as to a being capable of reasoning, and that can be taught to discern the right from the wrong, the wheat from the chaff. The real object of education should not be so much to multiply facts, as more particularly to draw out the pupil's reasoning powers. It is required also that the schoolmaster be trained for his office, and not a person who has taken up the position as the refuge for the destitute, but one who has properly studied the subject, and has become, as it were, a mental philosopher, in order to work successfully upon the varied material upon which he may be called to operate, so as to understand the capabilities of, and devices adapted to, each pupil.

Were this point regarded even in the management of the lower animals, so far as insisting that persons entrusted with the care of the same, should be thoroughly acquainted with their nature, etc.,—speculations in this way would prove

far more successful. As it is, such are left generally to the management of the most ignorant of Englishmen, who too often flog when they should caress,—for no other reason than to satisfy a drunken, revengeful disposition, vented upon an innocent and highly sensitive subject. It will be a good day for the brute creation, and a more profitable one for the owners of the same, when the managers of the horse, cow, and sheep, can give satisfactory answers as to their knowledge of the physical and teachable qualities of the animals over which they assume authority. Man should always remember too, that boys are little men, and have in common with their more matured adult, joys and sorrows, clouds and sunshine; and, moreover, possess peculiar observing faculties, and are eagle-eyed with respect to the perfections or otherwise of their elders, whom they often catch tripping, as they relax in their presence. Has not a boy eyes? Has not a boy ears? Has not a boy a reserved opinion? And when we consider rightly of the matter, too, how much more reasonable it appears after all, for age to sympathize with youth, than *vice versâ*! Age has passed through all the gradations of life, but youth has never been old, and can scarcely be expected to understand its greater pains and sorrows. Man is born to trouble; or why these

sobs, these swelling tears, chasing each other down the infant's dimpled cheek, or falling on the school-girl's task ? For the want of a little consideration in this matter, it is that we too often see the false management of children, and its sad effects. Not unfrequently we observe parents petting their children ; the father the girls, the mother the boys ; the father in his superior wisdom, and by right of the strongest, considers it right to oblige the boys to obey the little petted girls in every respect. Now had he not forgotten the feelings of his own boyhood, he would never have made such a mistake, which, for compulsion here being against nature, produces only hostility in the place of love towards the sisters ; but he would rather have appealed to their superior strength and powers ; then there would not have been a wall they would not have scaled in order to regain the truant ball, nor a tree they would not have climbed to free the entangled kite.

Emma Jane, a beautiful fair-haired girl, came bounding over the lawn, her face beaming and radiant with smiles ; in her hand she grasped a well-assorted bouquet of the sweetest wild-flowers plucked by her own tiny fingers, for the parent she loved ; but to render the offering more acceptable, descended to the kitchen in order to procure an appropriate charger for presenting the

same upon, but alas ! in returning, her active little foot slipped, the flowers lay scattered in confusion, and, sad catastrophe ! the plate broken in fractions. The mother, rushing out, could divine nothing but the weeping child and broken plate, and without divining the angelic cause that led to the direful effect, beat her and sent her sobbing to her room. Oh, what mischief was here accomplished ! That glorious budding mind, throbbing with the highest pulsations of our common humanity, shrank within itself, as the delicate sensitive-plant shrinks from the touch of men. She never brought her mother flowers again ! Let us not consider it too condescending to remember the days of childhood.

Now Bob, being a born creature, possessed all the properties and propensities common to such, viz. self-will, obstinacy, and all the other phases little man exhibits at different times, so that it was determined he should go to school. It might be also remarked here, that Bob possessed also at an early age the first law of our nature, and could take care of himself when very young, which fact was forcibly brought to his mind when grown to man's estate, after having one day repaired to the insurance office, to have his life insured, as the process is termed, although, as the reader must be, and doubtless is, perfectly

aware that after the ceremony the party most particularly concerned is not more sure, that is, his dear life is not more safe, but his friends are sure of receiving no inconsiderable sum, for which he paid compound interest during his vitality. Well, undergoing the usual preliminary medical examination, by the usual medical man, who after inspecting his tongue, feeling his pulse, sounding his chest, inquiring the age of his father and mother, sisters and brothers, alive and dead,—that is, how long had they lived that died, and how long had they been living that were still in the flesh, and how many years since the dead died ; and whether his grandfather and grandmother on both sides lived to a good old age, and whether the antecedent families for generations had been in any way notorious for any particular disease inherited by them, and which in all probability they had left as a legacy to their posterity,—then came the all-important interrogation, “Did you ever have a bone broken?” Which question he answered boldly and confidentially, without hesitation or fear of contradiction, in the negative. This answer was observed to give the greatest satisfaction to the M.D., F.R.L.S., F.R.C.S., etc., who at once commenced writing down his depositions,—having arrived doubtless at the conclusion, that the

frame and pillars being sound, the building would in all probability stand and pay the usual rent for many years. Accordingly, after receiving the congratulations of the managers on his very excellent constitution, as proved by the medical vouchers, likewise as to his clearness of perception with respect to life insurance, they parted; the big man in the red waistcoat giving him a profound salaam and patronizing smile, as he dropped from the steps into the street, in recognition, no doubt, of his being one of their tenants, occupying one of his company's houses; so after this episode he found himself legally and lawfully insured for some hundreds, to be of the greatest use in this; when he is in that.

In this manner then it was that Bob, when grown to man's estate, had the important fact of never having had a bone broken brought to his mind, thereby proving his possession of the first law of our nature, and having consequently taken care of himself; but although when a boy, having possessed many physical qualifications, his sire determined as before seen on discovering his mental ones likewise, therefore determined on sending him to school,—so, having found a master after his own heart, Bob in due time went under his tuition.

Now Bob's first master was a true specimen of

the old village pedagogue ; who in his earlier years had been in possession of considerable wealth, but having been addicted to the sports of the field, had raced, hunted, and shot away the bulk of his property, almost before becoming master of the same ; consequently he soon found himself penniless, and, as a natural result, friendless, in comparison with his days of prosperity ; in consequence of which he had placed himself in at that time, the refuge for the destitute, a village school ; expecting and receiving the support and patronage of his married friends, with whom he had been accustomed to amalgamate in his more ambitious days.

He had been represented to Bob's sire as a sound good scholar in every respect, and at the same time, as possessing the unusual faculty of writing with his left hand as well as his right, which faculty Bob observed, on closer inspection, arose from a physical defect, he in fact having shot away the two first fingers of his right hand when partridge shooting, so that the right could never be used in the exercise at all, and this circumstance tended to give the left the admired pre-eminence.

But before entering upon the engagements and requirements of the school, Bob deemed it prudent to ascertain, if possible, the duties and

regulations of the establishment ; so, having discovered a boy by the name of Sparkes, who had gone regularly to the academy for the previous two years, in consequence of his parents having known the master in his more important days—

“ You can’t do better, you can’t do better,” said Sparkes, “ than come to old Phil’s” (as the boys designated their master, his name being Philip) ; “ for,” said Sparkes, “ if a little late, why it doesn’t signify ; he gives us plenty of holidays, and the most angry and worst name he ever calls us is ‘ sensible fool,’ and we don’t mind that, for he uses it to all alike, without any distinction, and it just means nothing.”

The bill of fare at old Phil’s Bob ascertained from Sparkes likewise, which consisted of reading, *plus* writing and arithmetic, *minus* grammar, geography, history, etc. etc. ; flogging, too, according to the same authority, was always considered an extra, and seldom resorted to by old Phil. There was, therefore, as much difference between old Phil’s establishment and a fashionable boarding-school as exists between a first-class London hotel and a more lowly eating-house ; in the latter, the call-boy greets the ear on entering with roast beef, ditto mutton, ditto pork, etc. etc., verbally, all in a breath if possible, but then the charge is low, and the juvenile waiter does not

expect any fee ; in the former, the bill stands printed over the mantelpiece, naming all the substantial, as well as the delicacies of the season, but the charge is high, and extras probably will be demanded for plate, etc., and at the end of the discussion, the waiter will not reject, but rather expect, waiter's fees. No ; there was nothing superfluous at old Phil's : he possessed no printed circulars with all the 'ologies and 'graphies printed thereon, he acknowledged no cards or letters of reference to doctor this or doctor that ; and at the end of the quarter there were no extras.

Having, however, obtained all the necessary information, they set out together on the next Monday morning for Bob's first school, some two miles distant, when on crossing through the fields Sparkes commenced :—

“ Now I don't often walk if I can get a lift. There are generally some stray donkeys in the lane, and if we can only come up with them, we'll ride to school ; what de say ? ”

“ What ! ride without bridles ? ” inquired his companion.

“ What ! can't you ride without holding ? ” said Sparkes. “ Well, never mind ; look here, I guide mine as the Indian does his elephant, just by the movement or flourish of a little stick.”

“ Besides,” remarked Bob, “ whose donkeys are they ? ”

C S.

“Pooh, pooh!” said Sparkes; “what is that to us? I know not to whom the animals belong, and hope I never shall; but hurrah! hurrah! yonder they are, sure enough, cropping the bushes; but if the cunning brutes see us, they will be off indeed, like wild asses as they are. Look,” he continued; “I’ll get over the hedge, and go beyond them, you follow quietly up the lane, and when you see me jump over into the road, close up, and we shall have them in a twink.”

Bob followed the instructions, but not without some little doubt and misgiving, when presently, over came Sparkes into the lane; the animals, seeing they were entrapped, made up their donkey minds to force the passage and run the gauntlet, but finding the attempt useless, soon gave up the contest. On going up to them, which was a matter of some difficulty, their heads being defended by their heels, the boys caught one each, and mounted, and away the animals scampered like wild asses indeed. Every one accustomed to donkey riding knows the difficulty experienced in keeping his seat sometimes, even when the animal is saddled and bridled, but this difficulty is necessarily enhanced when these adjuncts are wanting; however, away they galloped, the free ones at full speed keeping in the van, when presently the whole troop turned short down a narrow and

steep lane on their right, and at right angles with the road. Sparkes kept his from following the troop, by the ingenious movement of his stick before the animal's right eye ; but Bob's, oh, help him ! galloped off at full speed with the rest, ever and anon rubbing the rider against one or the other of the fugitives, and kicking for dear liberty, as they descended the steep incline. The briars and thorns too, at this time, hung in graceful festoons over the lane, and nettles and thistles, in rich profusion and wild luxuriance, filled the bordering ditches. The cunning and sagacious brute on which Bob rode, constantly dragged him under the former, in order to bring him from his seat to the latter,—a seat which he would have gladly vacated, had she only given him a moment's time to dismount ; but finding that in order to get rid of her load, this plan likewise proved unsuccessful, the old hussy set on another tack : still galloping onwards, she commenced a most violent, determined, diagonal or askew sort of kicking ; right, left, right, left, her heels went into the air. This exercise had the unpleasant effect of throwing the rider from side to side, no sooner recovering himself on the left, than he was thrown to the right, and *vice versâ* again, and then to the shoulders ; when, on approaching the worst and most sudden part of the

lane, Bob saw that to keep his seat would be impossible, so commenced speculating a little on his downward course, when, brush ! he was dashed under a pendent briar, scratching his face, and leaving his cap hanging scarecrow-like in the bushes.

“ Shall I be pitched into that bed of nettles, and stung all over, or shall I be thrown on that hard road, with a broken arm, or skull fractured ? ” thought Bob ; when, with a sudden turn, and quick jerk, off he went, into the bed of nettles, and a very uncomfortable bed it proved to be. After falling, the old hussy made him a farewell present, in the shape of a kick, which, missing his pate, caught his shoulder, leaving a black-and-blue mark for many days. Bob’s face was dreadfully stung ; the barbed herbs, being well up on the defensive, caused much irritation. However, he made his way back as well as he could to the spot where he left Sparkes, and there he still remained, sure enough, holding his donkey, to all appearances, in a very affectionate embrace, his arms being round the animal’s neck, but which turned out to be the result of sheer necessity ; the animal, being bent on following its companions, could not be detained in any other manner.

“ Well,” commenced Sparkes, as Bob approached him, “ you have got a pretty face, and

no mistake ; if old Phil should see it, I am blessed if he won't think you have just recovered from the smallpox, or measles, or something of the kind ; but there's one thing to be said, he does not see very clearly, and you being a fresh boy, he can't be certain but that it is not your usual fresh colour. So come along ; but mind, not a word about the asses."

So having freed the animal, which made off at full speed in the direction of the troop, the boys started on the last mile of their journey, as fast as they could, in order to make up for lost time. On drawing nearer the school, however, Sparkes again quickened his pace, and more and more assumed the appearance of a person full of honest purpose, intent only on business ; but of course, on arriving at the school they were late, but as Sparkes remarked, " Old Phil won't mind that," so it turned out. On entering, Sparkes scratched off his cap in a great hurry, saying at the same time, " Sarven, Sir" (your servant, Sir),—an old mode of salutation at that time, in that place.

The school-room proved to be an ill-ventilated, low-pitched, oblong building, the walls of which were hung all round with an incongruous *mêlée* of slates, caps, dinner-bags, and cloaks ; round the desks the boys were sitting in their varied rural costumes ; the fireplace was of the old farm-

house construction, for the purpose of burning wood upon; and near this place of conflagration sat old Phil, with spectacles on nose, making and mending the goosequill pens,—an occupation, in addition to setting copies, which took up much of the time of the old village schoolmaster.

There he sat in all his absolute authority, surrounded by books and boys, boys and books. The schoolmaster was a short, nervous little man, with white hair, particularly red face, a rather suspiciously swollen nose, a sharp cunning eye, and quick determined voice.

Bob looked at him with that degree of reverence and awe he might have contemplated any other person whom he had been taught to acknowledge as his master. Presently, in order to make himself officious, Sparkes advanced up to old Phil, saying, as he did so,

“I have brought a new boy, Sir.”

“Oh, you have brought a new boy, have you?” said the master, looking at the same time very shrewdly over his spectacles; “and you have been with the asses too, I see,” observing the legs of Sparkes’s trousers covered with the animal’s hair, which Sparkes had neglected to brush away.

Sparkes looked uncomfortable and confused.

“Well,” he continued again, “I should have thought you might have come earlier, and shown

a better example on the first morning of your friend's appearance;" and, turning to Bob, commenced at once, "And so you are come to school, my lad, and I sincerely hope for the purpose of learning the business of letters. Now you must remember, my lad, that education is a personal thing; you will have a duty to perform as well as myself; yours will be to learn, mine to teach. Remember, my lad, and as you value knowledge, never to give way to think or utter such ideas as, 'I can't do this,' or 'I can't do that,' but, on the contrary, make up your mind to do anything and everything another boy can."

"Look," he continued; "see that boy, Bunson. When he first entered this place of general education, this academy of all that is necessary to make a boy wise,—Bunson, I repeat, could not tell how much nine times nine made, but now he can work long sums, now he can compute and calculate how many barley-corns it would take to go round the world at the equator, as well as how many farthings would reach from the earth to the sun; and I have little hesitation in saying, that should he go on expanding his mind in this very remarkable manner, that he will very soon be the first mathematician in the three kingdoms. Bunson, you see, has been very attentive—very attentive, and in this you must imitate him, or I

say that you may come here seven years, week-days and Sundays, and be none the wiser. Unless you give your mind, your attention, your all to this work, you will remain as ignorant, I repeat, as if you had never attended this academy of universal knowledge ;” when, on looking over his spectacles, “ Bunson !” he called out, “ you sensible fool ; what are you doing there ?”

Bunson during this harangue, during this said speech, which old Phil had been in the habit of recapitulating, with slight additions or subtractions, to every new boy, had been amusing himself and schoolfellows by responding, in voice and gesture, to every word of the well-known effusion.

“ You see that door ?” continued the master.

Bob answered in the affirmative.

“ Now that has been the door of this school-room ever since the school has been opened ; but what has it profited, I ask, by filling so honourable a position ? As well might it have been the door of old John Smith’s forge ; backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, it has been going for years ; and so will you, and be as little benefited, unless you give your eyes, your ears, your hands, your mind, your all, mental and physical, to the work ; but, on the contrary, if you do so, you will soon be the cleverest boy in the whole school. Now, go and join your school-fellows.”

CHAPTER II.

“With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father’s heartfelt glee;
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin—and to box.”

Cowper.

DURING the delivery of the well-known speech, Bob, as might easily be imagined, was engaged attentively contemplating and scrutinizing his new master, to whom, as before observed, the human face divine appeared red and swollen, and the nose stood out in bold relief, having the same disposition as the face in general; he observed, likewise, that his hand shook very much during the process of pen-mending; and now, too, for the first time, discovered that he had lost the two first fingers of his right hand. On his table, in passive amiability, lay a cane, a yard or so in length. Here, thought Bob with a sigh, is an instrument of punishment; may it

ever lie with respect to myself, in that dormant state of forgetfulness ! But he soon had the satisfaction of proving that the same was merely employed in striking the desk when talking became too much in the ascendancy.

Analytically and synthetically considering his new master's features, too, Bob thought he could discover, peering out from under his shaggy eyebrows, a degree of sympathy and benevolence not generally found in the physiognomy of the Mongolian or Malay ; in fact, Bob was favourably impressed with the visage of his master, and anticipated getting on tolerably well with him.

Presently old Phil rose from his seat, rubbing his hands, and remarking, at the same time, that since the rain had fallen the cold was rather more than agreeable.

"Suppose boys, suppose boys," he added, "we have a little wood fetched ?"

This observation caused a general uproar and confusion in the school, every boy at once vociferating, "I, Sir ! I, Sir ! I, Sir !" with arms and hands elevated, and each and all standing on the forms, in order to be the more prominently in view, as they volunteered for the honourable employment of wood-carriers.

"Down, boys ! down, boys ! sit down, the whole of you, you young rogues," said the master, at

- the same time striking his cane upon the desk, "or not one of you shall go."

This at once damped their ardour and cooled their courage; and peace having been restored, five or six of the strongest were selected, Bunson and Sparkes among the number, and off they started in the direction of the wood, leaving many disappointed ones behind, labouring and toiling over their sums, which one and all declared would not agree with the answer. In about an hour and the whole party could again be seen, led by Bunson, issuing from the wood, and descending the hill, each with a load that threatened to block up every road and avenue to and from the school-room; where, on arriving with the combustible matter, two or three of the boys would set to work making a fire; and never were pupils more delighted than they, when contemplating the blaze created by the fuel, obtained by themselves.

This was the usual manner in which old Phil supplied himself with caloric matter. And who will find fault with the arrangement? He liked the plan, and the boys liked it too; the old man never put item, "firing" in the bill; and if the exercise did not tend to strengthen the mental faculties, no doubt the whole physical powers were brought into action, and, consequently,

benefited. These little simple exercises, too, tended to foster a kind and unselfish disposition amongst the boys, and beat down that paltry small pride which some were probably indulging in; and this, perhaps, was worth something in after life. And then again, if the pupils did not succeed so well in their studies as could be wished or expected, old Phil possessed a clever manner of sending the fathers home quite comfortable respecting their sons in this respect; for if he could not positively declare that their reading, writing, and figures would one day qualify them for Secretary of State, or something higher if necessary,—he would, at least, make them out future Nelsons, Wellingtons, or some fighting heroes of greater antiquity, for, he would observe,—

“That son of yours, Sir, that son of yours, is a boy of no small spirit; he’s a genius, Sir, he’s a genius; there’s something in him, Sir. He can take care of himself, he can take his own part, and no mistake; he’ll be the one for the world; he’ll be the man by-and-by, to beat down and overcome all opposition, mental and physical. Yes, he’ll shine Sir, shine Sir; he’ll be worthy of the stock from which he sprang.”

And away went their sires, quite delighted with their progress, and the prophecy of the seer, (the

wish being father to the thought,) and quite satisfied that one day their sons would make no small stir in the world ; at the same time determining within themselves, to recommend old Phil and his academy to all their friends and neighbours,—he as a man of great acquirements and discernment, and the school the best of academies far and wide.

No ; old Phil never committed the fatal mistake of discussing and declaring the dullness of any of the pupils to their fathers ; for a clever old man was he !

With respect to the fighting abilities of his pupils, the master ascertained the first day of their inauguration, by looking through the window, which commanded the play-ground, or more particularly on such occasions fighting-ground ; for his boys had a system, when a new scholar arrived, to match him at the dinner-hour with another boy of similar size and strength. If the new boy refused to fight, they would command their selected *protégé* to up and give him the coward's blow, as they termed it,—the rogues well knowing that such a procedure would soon produce the desired effect, as flesh and blood cannot stand passively and be assailed in this manner, and very little doubt therefore existed that such a proceeding would tend to the desired pugilistic

encounter. But if the other refused to accept the lesson in the noble art of self-defence, and determined not to return the blow, he was ever afterwards stigmatized and branded a "coward"; but on the contrary, if he showed great courage, and fortitude, and the challenger suffered defeat, he then attained a high step in the school, and obtained the confidence and respect of the whole.

All these proceedings old Phil, as before remarked, observed from his window.

"Yes," he would say, "yes, there will be war until the rogues know which is best man; yes, young cocks will fight; it is all nature, all nature exactly."

The village in which Bob's first school was situated, appeared to have been, many antecedent centuries, a Roman station, as many relics, testifying to the bygone period, could still be found by the industrious antiquarian; thus, after drenching, washing rains in fields newly turned by the ever-vigilant plough, could be picked up silver and copper coins, bearing the Roman image and superscription. Roman or tessellated pavement likewise, of many designs and colours, was constantly being brought to light by accident, or the more inquisitive proceedings of the lover of antiquities. Surrounding this village, too, stood the ruins of what was once a formidable wall,

every stone of which had been cemented together in the peculiar manner known only to that at once clever and energetic people, refusing to surrender piecemeal to wind and weather, but occasionally falling in huge masses in fields below, and there remaining for an indefinite period. In short, everything in the neighbourhood bore evident tokens that at one time the spot had been the site of a dense and populous town, thronged probably by a gay and animated population, long swept away, and their places occupied by a few unsentimental unarchæological agriculturists, thinking little or nothing of its deeply interesting antecedents, caring only for the grateful yield of corn the land seldom failed in returning. Subsequently to the Romans, the proud Norman too seemed to have taken a fancy to this locality, and, as was his usual custom, built a strong stone castle on its most elevated position, the ruins of which still stood out in bold relief, silently but eloquently preaching to the passing traveller of the fall of empires, and the state of change to which proud nations have ever been subject. This ruin was usually chosen as the centre of the school's noontide exploits, as now the only inhabitants of the roofless walls, where once the merry feet of beauty danced, and the heavy tramp of the warrior was heard, were the daw and crow,

or solitary owl hooting and moaning in the pale moonlight,—with the exception, however, as was reported, and the boys half believed the legend, that when the antiquary birds were away, the shades of some departed fair and stouter warrior walked the empty halls at the sound of a midnight bell. Often did the pupils ascend the crumbling stone stairs of the tower, covered with the cryptogamia of ages, in order to gain the highest parapet and scale the crumbled walls in search of the nests of the before-named birds. To ascend the building was comparatively an easy task, but to descend quite another matter, the difficulty of which frequently prolonged the dinner hour; round and round the corkscrew stairs led a well-hole in the centre, without any friendly barrier for support. Well it was the head never turned giddy in the descent, for there stood gaping and yawning a black, apparently bottomless chasm, down which a stone ever and anon toppled, causing a stifled, chilling sound below. Again, and again, the boys on reaching *terra firma* declared they would never attempt the ascent any more,—a promise as soon broken, however, the next day. Such an effect had these perambulations on the nerves, that they often dreamed the scenes over again, with the accompaniment of falling, going, going, constantly dropping, but

never reaching the bottom, or if so, as on a bed of down. From this spot too they started the hare, in the game of 'hare and hounds.' Bunson's sire was quite a Nimrod, a mighty fox-hunter, his son, therefore, liked the sport, if only in semblance ; taking care always to monopolize the office of huntsman to himself, by right of the strongest. "Here," he would say, "you shall be hare, and you hound, and you whatever you like, but I will be huntsman myself;" when off would start the hare, in order to hide in the wood or copse, and the hounds soon after out of check, and driven on by Bunson in full cry, over hedge and ditch, field and pasture. It not unfrequently happened that in these sham sports the boys started a real hare, rabbit, or pheasant, which piece of intelligence Bunson was sure to communicate to old Phil, which information the old gentleman devoured with greedy voracity, as he looked over his spectacles,—being very inquisitive to know as to a yard or so the exact spot and locality from which the timid quarry sprang, the exact bush or tree near which it passed, its external appearance, and many other particulars, evidently of the greatest moment to the master.

Now Bob and all the boys knew that their master possessed a gun, likewise that he kept

a little dog of no one particular breed, tied in a corner of the washhouse, but that these were ever used, save in the destruction of a water-fowl or winter bird, would have been highly wrong for any pupil to have conjectured. But as before remarked, after the intelligence had been delivered by Bunson, the chief could be observed musing for a while, after which he would commence:—

“Boys, you have seen a hare to-day,—a real, harmless, little pussy?”

“Yes, Sir! yes, Sir! yes, Sir!”

“You saw a hare in the wood; now mind, don’t go there again, not to the same spot exactly; if you must go into the wood, keep up the other side. Bunson, you will see to that, will you?”

“Ay, ay, Sir!” returned that worthy.

“Yes, so do; for if the Squire should hear that you disturb the game, why we shall be in a mess in no time. Bunson, I should like to speak with you after school.”

“Ay, ay, Sir!” replied that worthy again.

So things went on at Bob’s first school, varied ever and anon by a friend calling in and taking the master for a little moment to the Dog and Bottle, where, what with narcotic fumes and composing glass, the school and its inmates were not unfrequently forgotten by the same. Of course,

on such occasions there would be for a time a regular juvenile revolution, every member fighting for supremacy, when after sundry skirmishes it would be settled that Bunson, being the stoutest, should take the master's place, to whom the scholars would quietly submit the rest of the afternoon. But at last it unfortunately happened that the boys of the school and village in general had a serious misunderstanding with the boys from the parish from which Bob and Sparkes came, in consequence of which they found themselves in constant broils, and, being in a minority, not unfrequently coming off worsted.

These things gained such a pitch at last that the same could not be settled by mere words, Bob and his companion being dreadfully victimized by their schoolfellows. The champion of the village, and one of the scholars likewise, was a short, chubby, big-headed, unmeaning-faced braggart, glorying in the name of Duke, about sixteen years of age, a most consummate coward that ever existed, but somehow or other he prided himself in being the champion of the place, and the superior pugilist in the parish, and so all the boys thought. Likewise now it happened that Sparkes had a brother, personally unknown to Duke, but of whom he had heard much, about his own age, a quick, noble, active fellow, as quiet as

a lamb in peace, as noble as a lion in war, to whom Sparkes related how Duke and all the boys ill-used him and his schoolfellow. To which his brother replied, that he had long wished to have a brush with that crower on his own dung-hill, so sent him a challenge by Sparkes the next morning in due form. As Sparkes and Bob proceeded on their journey, Sparkes broke forth.

“Won’t my brother give it Duke, that’s all ! I know he will.”

On entering the place of learning, Sparkes made up at once to Duke, and commenced—

“Duke, my brother George, any time you like and place you mention, will come and give you a thrashing.”

No sooner had Duke received this peculiar address than he jumped out of the desk, and, clenching his fists, said, “Say that again, and I will level you.”

“No ! no ! no !” cried all the boys ; “send an answer back, send an answer back, Duke ;” feeling satisfied that their Duke would beat George ; the answer being accordingly returned that evening by Sparkes, to the effect that Duke was fully prepared to meet George on the following afternoon, at the west side of the village, under the chestnut-trees known as the Three Champions.

George, having received Duke's reply, threw his cap into the air, leaped from the ground, and appeared as delighted as a candidate going to meet the Prime Minister in order to receive some choice commission. "There is nothing better I have long desired than to meet that boaster on his own ground, that cock on his own dunghill ; I say, he has been coming the high and mighty too long, a deal," said George.

Now it so happened, that Duke had been using his influence to get Sparkes and Bob into odium with the owner of the before-mentioned donkeys, whom he professed to know, and had anything happened to the animals, without doubt the boys would have been represented as the authors of the mischief ; therefore, in order to defy his opponent, George determined on riding the animals up to the schoolroom door, like some mighty conqueror, (barring that such creatures have generally been considered emblems of peace.) As the afternoon advanced, it was not very difficult to observe that Duke felt his position : he looked unusually pale and excited ; he appeared, likewise, to be much puzzled over his sums ; his writing-book, too, had been blotted in several places, so that old Phil deemed it necessary more than once to call him a "sensible fool ;" in fact, Duke appeared to be labouring under no little mental

anxiety, which, in opposition to the encouragement given him by his seconds, continued to increase towards the proposed hour, and little doubt existed that he would have gladly given in, only he well knew the boys—his seconds—would not allow him to indulge in such a cowardly thought. At the hour of 4 P.M., up came George, sure enough, actually riding upon the before-named donkeys, and whose apparition caused the greatest excitement in the school. George looked paler than usual ; but the champion of the village, on seeing him, turned deadly white, having little calculated that he would have had the impudent daring to enter the village, and with the donkeys too ; but screwing up courage, and without asking leave, rushed out of the school to meet his antagonist.

“ Well,” commenced George, leisurely folding his arms ; “ well, Duke, you see I am come.”

“ Yes, I see you are,” replied the champion, “ and with the donkeys, too, you have no right with.”

“ Just so,” returned George ; “ and more than that, Duke, you shall have them if you can recover them ; I will return, and await your presence under the Three Champions.” So, turning the animals, away went George in the direction of the aforesaid trees.

As Duke returned into school, the boys crowded

round him, saying, "What do you think of him, Duke, eh? You'll beat him like smoke; he's not nearly so big as you are; give him one under and one over in quick time, and you will settle him in a twink." But; to judge from appearances, Duke could see little smoke or fun in the coming engagement; as he continued quietly gazing for something, which was all the time under his nose, but which his optics stubbornly refused to recognize.

Old Phil saw and heard all, but for a time said little, and did not even appear to notice what was going on in the room. He knew George very well, from being in the habit of visiting at his father's; and presently, in quite a confidential manner, spoke to some of the leading boys, saying, "Depend upon it, boys; depend upon it, boys, Duke has this time made a mistake. You may be sure of that, and you'll know presently that I am right. Duke, I say, has underrated his man."

School over, all the boys made in the direction of the Three Champions,—Duke supported by the whole of the pupils, Bob and Sparkes excepted; all of whom, as they quickly walked along, were busily engaged giving him what they considered the necessary instructions in the art of self-defence, in order to ensure victory. As they ap-

proached the before-named spot, true enough, there stood George, standing with the donkeys.

The afternoon was a peculiarly sultry one, in the middle of summer. The sun, during the former part of the day, had been shining in his greatest refulgence, but now was nearly hidden from view by a thick hazy curtain, permitting his appearance only in a subdued form, as through a London fog. The swallows industriously skimming the surface of the adjacent horsepond, ever and anon dipped their feathers in the water, as they hawked their tiny prey, and the shrill voice of chanticleer could be heard resounding through the neighbouring rickyard, answering the distant challenger, or his softer chuck, chuck, coaxing his dames to seek shelter under the bulky wheat-ricks.

“Now,” said George, “take care of the donkeys, and when I have beaten Duke we will ride off in triumph,” when at once stepping up to his opponent, observed, “Give me your hand, Duke; I owe you no ill-will;” which Duke refused to do. “Very well, then,” returned George, “it can’t be helped,” and at once threw off his jacket, which Duke, on his part, being a long time preparing to do, and which George interpreted as a purposed delay, commenced the fight; administering Duke one or two decided blows in the

vicinity of the nose before he had prepared for his defence. Presently, however, Duke became infuriated, and struck out in all directions like a mad bull, without decision or plan, which proved to be nothing more than lost strength,—consequently, after a short struggle, gave up the conflict in favour of George, declaring he had had quite enough, which George acknowledged by throwing his cap into the air. George then making up to the seconds, asked them if they were satisfied, which their countenances answered in the negative. The conqueror again threw his cap into the air, at the same time remarking, “Now see you never bring me this way again on the same errand, or it will be the worse for you. Good bye, Duke!” mounted the donkeys, leaving the seconds stanching the blood copiously flowing from Duke’s olfactories, and observing, as he rode away, “They’ll be quiet now, you will see; and as for their champion, I would beat a dozen such any morning before breakfast. Come up, donkeys!” And off galloped the animals at their full speed, George shouting and laughing that he could hardly keep his seat.

In some spirits there appears to be an uncontrollable feeling for combat; fighting is their highest ambition, conquering their greatest good. This feeling shone out in a remarkable manner

in the boy to whom allusion has been made ; noble and generous in the highest degree, when he had obtained supremacy, yet the love of conquest, the thirst for rule, (although, when obtained, left him amiable and quiet,) made him the object of dread, and a person for ever to be avoided, by some of the inhabitants, especially a few elderly ladies, who looked upon him in the light of a bulldog, or some other savage animal.

On reaching the school the following day, the boys were unusually mute, as if some great calamity had overtaken them. And so it had ; their boasted champion had been beaten. Duke occupied his usual position, having one eye slightly discoloured, and a cut on the upper lip, which marks he was most anxious to hide from Bob and Sparkes. As the day advanced, however, the boys became kind and familiar ; such being the result of this first victory.

The studies progressed again as usual. Bob's copy-book, with horse and jockey on the cover, had nearly all the parallels traced ; and long anterior to this Bob had committed to memory the moral inculcated on the cover under the spirited equestrian, viz. :—

“ They run so long, they run so fast,
No wonder they run out at last ;
They run in debt, and then to pay,
They distance all, and run away.”

In figures, too, Bob had reached the all-important rule of simple proportion, disregarding, in some measure, the admonition given and well known to every schoolboy, in the words,—

“ Multiplication is vexation,
Division twice as bad,
The Rule of Three will puzzle me,
And Practice drive me mad.”

How much more encouraging are the lines written by another !

“ Multiplication is elation,
Division makes me glad,
The Rule of Three it comforts me,
And Practice suits this lad.”

There was however, little fear of any of Old Phil's scholars going mad in this respect, as they observed the caution too particularly for this awful calamity to overtake any of them.

Bob's friends leaving this part of the country, of course Bob left the school ; shortly after which, information reached them that Old Phil had paid the debt of nature ; and of him it might be truly said, that his failings were not sufficient to eclipse all his perfections. The boys liked him. He possessed a happy manner of making them feel that his business was their business, his undertakings, their undertakings. Of the education much could not be said more than that it was

as good as was generally given in country villages for the like remuneration. Much may be pleaded, too, in excuse, for the old pedagogue ; he, as before seen, had been possessed of wealth, which, under his management, melted away like snow in harvest, after which greater troubles followed ; in rapid succession, he had followed wife and children to their last resting-place, till he alone stood in the world a desolate being. Peace to his ashes !

From appearances, it might be argued that Duke grew up a confirmed braggart, and George a conquering hero. But the matured tree is not always what it was when a sapling. Duke probably met with trials and misfortunes which bent his will like the rough winds the sapling, or like fire the useless ore, for a useful member of society. George, in like manner perhaps, concentrated his boundless energies, not in the vulgar pugilist, but as a patriot or philanthropist in the society of which he formed a part.

It was now for the first time that Bob was about to be made acquainted with that great domestic trial termed "moving." His mother and her assistants had been actively engaged for days in making everything uncomfortable that had been comfortable, and putting out of place everything that once acknowledged a whereabouts ; so that all day long, Bob wandered up

and down in search of something he required, but which had long been placed under the protection of canvas and rope. Cups, glasses, books, pictures, ornaments, all had disappeared from their accustomed shelves and hooks, and everything became so changed, that even the old cat, on looking round on the walls, could scarcely believe himself to be roaming over the same tenement; and there he would sit for minutes together on one of the chairs, silently puzzling his pussy brains in order if possible to comprehend the general transformation,—failing in which, a subdued and resigned kind of mew would escape from him as he made off into another room, to see if the same change had taken place there likewise; when feeling convinced of the fact, would then give vent to his feelings by a loud “Mow! mow!” as much as to say, “Here’s pretty work; discomfort, I’m sure, I’m certain, is coming on.’ Of all domestic animals Puss is the most disturbed by the general confusion of moving; it is not only on leaving the old house, but likewise in taking to the new, that Puss feels seriously annoyed; for weeks he seems determined on not having anything to do with the new tenement, and is ever watching an opportunity to make his exit by door, chimney, or window, if happily he might

find his way back again to the old house at home. Cats, indeed, are truly domestic animals; they enjoy and very much appreciate domestic comfort; they love a nice cheerful fireside, a clean hearth, polished stove, with Turkey carpet under their velvety feet; surrounded by such, they will sit and sing away with half closed, dreamy eyes, and grateful-looking countenance, until we almost begin to feel the same resignation too; but only let there be discomfort in the family, a little commotion in the domestic arrangements, carpet up, fire out, and Puss is off, in wild affright, to some far less disturbed scenes. Yes, Puss, you are deservedly a domestic pet. What a pity it is that those dreamy eyes, should ever light up with murderous intent and fire at the dear little canary in his cage! What a pity! that those soft gloved claws, softer than my lady's fingers, should ever send forth such instruments of torture, dyeing the pretty feathers of my frail singing pets in their life-blood! Oh, Puss, Puss! after all, you are a subtle paradox.

But moving-time in the country is a time of trouble, a period of domestic trial; nothing going on in the usual way, cupboards empty, no cooking, no,—for there is nothing to cook with. But the last night in the old house is the worst by far; no curtains to your window, no candlestick,

no bedstead but the lowly floor, to which you retire at the hour of twelve, with the delightful intimation that you must be up and doing again at four, ready for the army of removes expected to clear the house and away soon after six. This is enough to sicken the most change-loving creature in this wide world. But then comes the morning. No water to wash, no towel, no looking-glass, no breakfast, but a sort of Passoverfeast, taken in an erect position. And this confusion, experienced first in the old house, must be ended in the new ; for after days and days of unpacking, putting up and pulling down again ; after days of screwing, hammering, and carpentering of every description, still there remains something to done ; how can it be otherwise, when all that has been taken down, after years of putting up, must be in their adjusted positions in a few days ? Last scene of all, the multiplicity of broken legs, arms, and other fractures of chairs and tables, broken crockery, crushed boxes, and the like. Talk indeed of washing-day ! why, the comparison bears no analogy to moving-day ; it is like comparing an April shower with a thunderstorm, a cooling breeze to a hurricane ; in short, moving is an incomparable nuisance. Talk of three removes being as bad as a fire ! one is a fire itself, burning up, consuming every do-

mestic comfort in life. Happy, thrice happy the man who can say, "I am living where my father lived, and his father before him," but they moved, having at their back, in order to help them, all the kind feelings and good wishes of their friends and neighbours, who wished them well through this disagreeable business, who hoped the weather would prove fine, with many more hopes and exclamations, as "I moved once, I shall never forget that day," and the like. Yes, they moved under a parting shower of good wishes and blessings.

The furniture having to precede the family many hours, it was deemed advisable that Bob, being a small representative of the family, should join the *corps de chattels*; not that he could do much in the way of luggage-guard, but it appeared possible that he might be able to keep the men to time, etc. So, after twenty long country miles, they arrived at last at the river and passage-house, where the whole had to cross in the passage-boat at high-water.

The men having unloaded the furniture, returned again to the last village through which they had passed, in order to refresh themselves and horses, leaving Bob sentry over goods, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the family.

The river on whose banks the boy now stood, and second to none in interest in the British

Islands, was at this point, and at high-water, more than a mile in width, but at the ebbing of the tide was left a mere wide, sandy channel, nearly dry, with the exception of one or two freshwater streams, which at the right moment could be waded with safety by the pedestrian, and the opposite shore gained. Here, at the return of tide, could be witnessed a grand and magnificent natural phenomenon,—proud Neptune, like an absolute potentate, coming up from his bed of ocean to confirm his rights, rapidly and more rapidly advancing, in his foaming chariot, with hoary head and threatening roar, as the waters triumphantly swept over sand and rock, disputing with the downward currents their original channels; and woe to the disputer of their advance! Many were the legends current of the hollow moans and dying groans of those who had dared to defy the same by remaining too long on the silvery sands, or too late in making the before-named transit.

This magnificent head of water was not inappropriately termed by the country people the “Racehorse,” and it was the custom with some of the most daring and clever boatmen to sail down the freshwater courses and meet the advancing swell. This could frequently be successfully accomplished by the experienced boatmen, by keeping the bows at right angles with the

head of tide : but if the least acute angle was formed, and the smallest broadside presented, an upset was inevitable. Many are the persons who have recklessly thrown away their lives in this manner.

At the moment Bob arrived, this phenomenon was passing in all its wonted grandeur ; the gulls and crows were screaming in wild excitement as they hovered over the water, and ever and anon swooping into the flood, welcomed its return as the means by which they obtained their slippery prey.

Hours had now passed, and found Bob still watching the flowing of the tide as it rose higher and higher, until it reached the day's high-water mark. He had seen the passage-boat, with its living freight of men, horses, and bullocks, go and return again, loaded with fresh voyagers from the opposite side, yet his friends came not. On the edge of the river Bob remained stretching his organs of vision to the other side of the water, to him a land of promise, yet wondering what sort of country that would prove itself to be, no one taking any notice of him because he was only a boy. Bob felt his pockets ; they had not been prepared for any emergency, no delay having anticipated. Night rapidly advanced ; the sun, having finished his course, had sunk in the west,

and the moon in her autumnal refulgence had taken up the night-watch. Presently, however, and after several times placing his ear to the ground, Bob to his real delight, heard the sound of horses' feet approaching, and in a few moments his friends hove in sight. It appeared that in one of the country roads, far away from home or dwelling, they had suffered a breakdown, which deranged all their original plans.

"You can't go over to-night, Sir," said the ferryman to Bob's sire; "it is low water, and tide nearly run out; there's not the least chance of it."

"But I must cross," returned Bob's sire; "friends are awaiting to receive me on the other side, and I have pledged my word to be with them this evening; and with them I'll be, if I can possibly manage it. Why, man, I have important business to transact in the morning."

"Ay, ay, Sir, I see it all," said the ferryman, "but I can't help it; there's not a sea-dog nor land-lubber that would risk his boat a night like this, and the tide running out strong. Come into the house, and I will see what can be done for you during the night," the man being land-lord as well as ferryman.

They entered the "Fishing Smack," every room of which appeared choke-full of beer, tobacco-

smoke, and men, the latter of such formidable appearance, and decked out in such semi-aquatic costume, that had any one inquired of Bob their presumed occupation, he would have answered "smugglers," as they so very nearly resembled, in his opinion, such characters spoken of by Sir Walter Scott in some of his works. Many were engaged shuffling cards, shaking dice, with other vulgar pastimes ; others were leaning over their chairs, coaxing and flattering their buxom landlady, all of which she appeared to take in good part, being anxious, in return, to supply their thirsty solicitations. Another member of the party had fixed himself in the chimney-corner, drawling out some sea song, ever and anon commanding and demanding silence by striking the bottom of the pewter pot against the table.

"You can't remain here to-night," said the landlady, who was master and mistress too ; "you can't indeed ; I have not beds sufficient. The thing is utterly impossible."

"Then what is to be done?" enquired Bob's sire. "Our conveyance has returned, and we are seven miles from the next inn."

"I can't help it," answered the woman ; "I don't know, and I don't care ; but to remain here during the night is impossible."

Neither money nor words were of any avail.

As a last resource he appealed to her motherly feelings, telling her that his wife travelled with a baby only a month old,—all with a like success.

“John,” said she, calling to her husband, “you must put the gemman over at low water; the tide will have run out by nine; there will be plenty of fresh below passage. Get the boat down there; they will be able, no doubt, to walk over the half mile of sand.”

And this most obedient, passive apology for a husband consented; and they left with the understanding that the goods and chattels should be forwarded at high-water the next day.

As they entered the boat, the moon shone kindly upon the water, giving it the appearance of a river of silver. How different, how noble, how unconditional is nature in her benefits, when compared with man! The rain rains, and the sun shines, on the evil and good alike. The heavens dispense their blessings upon the man who never acknowledges the Author of nature, as well as upon the one who says, “The heavens declare the glory of God,” etc. etc. Presently, as Bob hung over the boat, and dabbled his hand in the passing water, he heard the man at the helm say, “We’ll drop down as near as we can to Black Rock Point; then she won’t have so much sand to walk over;” and in a few moments

they landed on the Rocks, covered with seaweed, which draped the same in graceful and beautiful festoons, but which at the same time rendered them wet, slippery, and disagreeable.

Having arrived safely, and the road pointed out, the party commenced their troublesome journey of four miles. Bob's little sisters soon commenced complaining of feeling tired, and so commenced crying in chorus, with the exception of the one under Bob's especial convoy, but who, on kicking against a turf of grass, fell, and on rising joined the general harmony. So on they marched, slowly but not silently; but no one heard, for in the journey of four miles no one met them, but ever and anon they passed a solitary farm, the inmates of which were probably dreaming of

“Crops of hay, and larger barn,
To store the grateful yield of corn.”

Arrived at the toll-house, which barred the entrance to their desired haven, the toll-woman, a stout, motherly-looking dame, could be observed in the act of holding a strong argument with a boy with donkey and pots, who, as he leisurely leaned over the same, determined in not being convinced by the lady's reasoning. The subject of contention appeared to be the propriety or otherwise of the boy paying the extra toll, as she declared it was some minutes past twelve o'clock,

and therefore he had entered on another day, for which the ticket did not serve ; but the boy, on his part, stoutly declared that it wanted some minutes of that fatal hour ; but on hearing the general cry, the subject dropped. As the party drew near the official residence, the mistress advanced toward them, with her expiring oil lamp in hand, which was now only the remains of the light it had once been, and commenced—"Whatever is the matter ? Where are ye coming from—going to—at this late hour ? And that poor woman, too," in allusion to Bob's mamma ; "why it will kill her, as sure as can be, right out—that it will, now."

To whom Bob's sire, tired as he was, briefly related the history of his nocturnal travels, on which she gave the little ones a cup of cold water ; and having pressed the donkey and pots into the service of the infantry, deposited an equal number on each side, like Gilpin's bottles, to make their balance true. Thus they entered, under cover of the friendly night, the place of their adoption. Bob's mother was taken ill, and her life long despaired of ; and the little one who fell took the croup and died, and went to join Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." Weep not for departed infants ; think how many trials, disappointments, and temptations they have escaped.

CHAPTER III.

“Win her with gifts, if she respect not words ;
Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More than quick words, do move a woman’s mind.”

Shakespeare.

HAVING arrived at this place about a fortnight, and things nearly set in order, Bob determined upon taking a stroll round the place of his adoption, to reconnoitre a little, and make a few general observations. Now this movement proved the signal for the boys of the town to be on the move, too ; for no sooner had Bob made his appearance, and, quietly wending his way, silently remarking the, to him, new features of his new position, than he observed a big boy approaching, bringing with him another little cur of humanity, with thick-set features, apple cheeks, and ugly figure. Drawing close up to Bob, the former commenced—“Will you fight him?”

“I don’t know the boy,” replied Bob, “and have no particular wish to fight.”

“ Ah, well,” said the boy, “ he’ll fight you, he says ; and, if you are not a coward, you’ll not let him say that long without returning the compliment.” So saying, he ordered the other up to give him what he termed the coward’s blow. Thus, after various similar engagements, with the same results as at old Phil’s, Bob’s authority became established, and he was permitted to walk the streets unmolested, and join in their games and sports, being deemed a worthy member of their society.

I would just remark here that boys, unless properly trained, are frequently void of all feeling. There are wolves as well as lambs in every fold ; the former possess no sympathy for the latter. This was particularly the case with country boys at this time ; the quiet and inoffensive, but at the same time more intellectual and refined, were held too often in scorn and derision, whilst the mere fighting bully would be looked upon with great admiration and respect. In this manner, at public schools, many a promising, affectionate disposition has been all but ruined. A boy of weak physical constitution is no match for the strong and daring rogues. Under proper care and management, he would likewise probably become equally clever, and attain to any degree of eminence in his studies ; but his weak physical

constitution constitutes him sensitive in the highest degree, and the jeers and sarcasms of the young Goliaths wound him to the quick, and render him still more nervous and less competent to pass through his exercises ; for it must not be forgotten that a boy feels tenfold more the contempt of his schoolfellows than the reprimand of the master. In the education of boys this point should never be lost sight of by the master, but a watch kept, in order to ascertain if this feeling is being indulged in by any of the pupils toward their schoolfellows, and, if so, eradicated if possible, and replaced by a kind and sympathizing disposition to all around. Of course this point was entirely neglected in schools to which allusion has been made, and perhaps rather encouraged than otherwise.

In this place it so happened that Bob's father became acquainted with a countryman and neighbour, who, after some little time, professed a sort of friendship for Bob ; but he was a selfish piece of humanity as ever existed. One day, however, he accosted Bob's sire, in the following manner :—" I say, Mr. Whatdecall " (he never remembered names), " that youngster of yours seems a likely lad enough. Perhaps when he's out of school he wouldn't mind coming into my orchard, and have a bit of fun, picking up apples "

(he always called work fun when he wanted volunteers), "with two or three more who are coming this evening?" Having heard of orchards and apples, neither persuasion nor force were necessary to oblige Bob to enter upon the engagement; for the freedom of the fields was his greatest delight. He would do anything, and go anywhere, to have the opportunity of rambling over broad acres.

The gentleman who thus addressed Bob's father was called by the country-people "Mr. John." Mr. John was the only son of a rich landowner and business man, who had gained the unenviable appellation of "miser" (wretched). He had been married many years when his wife presented him with Mr. John, who was fast now getting into years too, being upwards of fifty; and, as the people remarked, the elder would not be dead whilst the younger was living,—the resemblance, both physical and mental, being so great. The father of Mr. John was a thin, withered, elderly representative of humanity, usually dressed in black pantaloons and gaiters, from the latter of which the calves had been retreating many years; low shoes, with silver buckles, grey coat, the whole covered in with a broad-brimmed hat, sufficiently broad to serve the purpose of umbrella or parasol, if necessary. Altogether Mr. John's

father would have struck the impartial observer as a spare, contracted man ; and so he was. Now his wife, the mother of Mr. John, having died some years anterior to Bob's acquaintance with him, and a decent time having elapsed, he, like many other elderly gentlemen before him, commenced looking out for a second helpmeet ; so after making many long, touching, and eloquent speeches to the surrounding young and fair, and discovering that in consequence of his age, no substantial effect was produced in the minds of the independent and wealthy, who, although they would attentively listen to the ready effusions of antiquity, preferred, at the same time, the quick step and glowing cheek of youth, and shrunk from becoming the nurse of decrepitude and age, preferring rather to be the fosterers of fresh and smiling infancy ; so Mr. John's father turned his attention from the parlour of his neighbours to the kitchen, and to his own kitchen, for this desideratum. Now there were many advantages in this resolution ; distance had for some time been a serious obstacle with him, and walking a troublesome exercise ; here were only a few descending steps, and there, in all its bright refulgence, was an object in the kitchenmaid ; besides, he considered it more than probable, indeed possible, that the kitchenmaid would not refuse to become

mistress of the house in which she had served as maid ; she would in all probability waive the feelings of youth for those of ease and plenty, and to be called Mrs. G., and to be the honoured, the nearest friend to him, who was once the distant and exacting master ; before this, too, the old gentleman had been nearly won by her affectionate solicitations on his behalf, she having anticipated every little want, even of the most minute description,—his shoes always stood warmed, stockings turned toes inwards, to facilitate the entrance of the foot, hat brushed, bed turned over in the most exact manner, and at the proper time, the kettle stood on the hob, singing away with the most elastic breath, declaring its readiness to prepare the comforting glass. In fact, so particular had these kindnesses been, that some ill-natured people said they thought, indeed, were certain, that the maid was setting her cap at the master ; and, indeed, the old gentleman himself had been by degrees drawn in, as by a subtle *maelström*, by these little attentions from his kitchen, and at once commenced thinking that he could not do better for his comfort and for her comfort, for his happiness and for her happiness, than make a proposition, declaration, or something of the sort, without delay,—more especially as Bill, the ostler, was already in the field, and was constantly cast-

ing sheep's eyes in the direction of the kitchen and its productions. So after much decision and indecision, after much caution, deliberation, and contemplation, which ended in the master becoming more blind to the maid's failings, and more enamoured with her virtues, and more in raptures with her physical appearance,—he one day, after admiring her in the kitchen, in the act of making apple-dumplings, trotted up to her and said, "Sally, darling Sally! will you become my wife, my bosom friend, my other self, dear Sally? Answer me at once, girl, at once; say yes, say yes!"

To which Sally replied, "Lor, Sir! what will folks say?"

To which question the master answered, "Never mind, girl; never mind; they will soon become used to it and leave off saying;" and, rising again from his seat, where he had imperceptibly sunk whilst contemplating the maid, demanded, "Answer me, girl; answer me,—now, now, at once!"

When the maid, seeing all the advantages of accepting, and the disadvantages of refusing, and considering that there was little danger of Bill, the ostler, drowning or hanging himself in disgust at such a proceeding, answered, "Yes, Sir, I will be your lawful wife."

On which the old gentleman touched her lovingly under the chin ; administered in a loud and determined manner a kiss, which echoed through the tin dish-covers, entering at number one, the smallest, and never stopping until making its exit through number ten, the largest.

So, shortly after this little episode, Mr. John found himself in possession of a new mamma-in-law, much younger than himself, and whom he could never be prevailed upon to recognize ; consequently, from that time, there was a division in the house of the miser, Mr. John and his wife refusing to agree with Mr. John's father's new and better half. In fact, Mr. John would have left the scene altogether, had it not been that he considered it more prudent to remain near in order to watch his own interests, for, said he, " As father has done one foolish thing, there's no knowing how soon he may do another.

Now, as time rolled on, Mr. John's new mamma-in-law presented Mr. John with two half-sisters, whom Mr. John contemptuously designated the " gals," and who, in due time, of course, were sent to one of the first and most fashionable boarding-schools in the neighbourhood, where they were taught all the modern and refined accomplishments ; whether talented or otherwise, suffice it to say that their Ma', not having had the like ad-

vantages, was perfectly satisfied with their progress and advancement in the higher branches, because, as she said, they had been taught the same by the best masters and governesses money could command, and, when the young ladies returned home to enjoy the usual holidays, she was very particular and exacting that every one, everybody, should commence their names with the prefix Miss; indeed, she did so herself, by way of example, ignoring for ever the vulgar style of address merely by their nude appellatives. Mr. G., too, purchased for the elder Miss a new piano, which was duly inaugurated in the little parlour; and there the old gentleman would while away many hours, listening to the four new tunes played by his daughter, and which she had learnt before the holidays; for it was now apparent that the extraordinary shrewdness for business, which had been his distinguishing characteristic, was fast leaving him; indeed so conspicuous had this feature become, that Mr. John considered it wise to persuade his father to give up the reins of the same to him, in order that the chariot of commerce might not be impeded, but, on the contrary, driven more swiftly and surely, in which proposition Mr. John's father acquiesced, so soon as the proper arrangements could be made. Now Mr. John's father always had an antipathy to

will-making, and when urged to do so by his better half, would answer, "Time enough yet for that, girl ; sha'n't die yet, girl, please God !" and the like, as if the act of declaring his last will and testament, as he would wish the same carried out after his time on earth, would hasten his departure ; so in fact he had lived to this very uncertain age without fulfilling this very important duty. This stubbornness of her lord caused Mr. John's stepmamma much uneasiness and anxious consideration, for "Who knows," said she, "how my poor girls will fare should anything suddenly happen to their Pa'?" and so determined on consulting her legal man, as she termed her solicitor, on the subject, who advised her by all means, and without delay, to endeavour to prevail on her husband to state to him his last wishes and desires, which he would feel a great pleasure in inscribing at once on parchment, in a safe and indisputable form. So after many long, but soft arguments, in order not to frighten or shock Mr. G.'s nerves, and after receiving the usual answer, "Sha'n't die yet, girl, please God," she then and at once appealed to his parental feelings, saying, that if he had no feeling for her, he should remember his duty towards his children, which if not righteously performed in this world, would in all probability render him restless in the next. He consented,

on which she sent for her legal man, who took down his last wishes, in the following tautological, but lawful and faithful manner:—

“I, John G. the elder, being in the seventy-eighth year of my age, but of sound and perfect mind and memory, but not knowing how soon I might be deprived of both, hereby make and declare this my last will and testament. And I hereby declare, that whatever may have been written or spoken by me, at any time, in any place, antecedent to these presents, shall be henceforth and for ever null and void. I hereby leave to my lawful son John, all that messuage and dwelling house, known as my residence these fifty years past, and which is now in the occupation of my said son John; with cottages, coach-houses, stables, cellars, sheds, closets, attached or detached, but belonging thereto; with all rents, businesses, or emoluments arising therefrom. I likewise leave to my son John, all that freehold property known as ‘Wisdom’s Acres;’ with orchards, fields, paddocks, gardens, buildings, trees, timbers, sheds, barns, gates, stiles, fences, with whatever shall be found on the premises at my decease; as horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, mules, asses, poultry, waggons, carts, ploughs, whatever or wherever found on the premises; with rents, businesses, and emoluments

arising therefrom, the whole of which property is enclosed in a ring fence, and known as 'Wisdom's Acres.' To my wife Sally, I leave all that funded property, amounting to £500 per annum, to be for the time present for her and her daughters' especial use, under the management of the trustees, but to each of my daughters, on the day of her marriage, shall be paid out of the said funded property one thousand pounds ; and at my wife's death the remaining funded property shall be equally divided between my said daughters ; and in the event of my son John dying 'without male issue and lawful heir,' then the property possessed by him shall in like manner, after his widow, revert to my daughter or daughters, or their posterity.

" Likewise, I declare this my last will and testament, that should my wife Sally think proper in wantonness again to marry ; then, all the said property or properties, left her by me shall at once and from that day revert to my daughter or daughters, as the case may be. And this I declare my last will and testament, as witness my hand this 14th day of May, 18—.

" Signed in the presence of—

" WILLIAM LAWFUL, Solicitor.

" HENRY CUREALL, M.D.

" JOHN WILSON, Friend."

No sooner had the document been signed, than the testator fell into a drowsy swoon, from which it appeared quite evident that the signature had not been obtained any too soon ; for there sat the principal in the act, quite incompetent for any further mental or bodily exertion. It was evident that the old barque was breaking up, that the voyage of life had nearly ended ; and in a few days the remains of Mr. John's father were carried to their last earthly home, where rich and poor, high and low, master and slave, the oppressor and the oppressed, meet on equal terms. Go to the grave, proud man ; contemplate it ; consider it well ; and thou shalt learn a lesson of humility. Much worldly pomp and funeral pageantry were called into requisition, to aid in conveying to the tomb all that was mortal of poor Mr. G. Mourners, real and artificial, were not wanting in order to swell the solemn train ; sable plumes and jet caparisoned steeds were likewise brought into action, in order to render the obsequies more imposing. But during this ado with the dead and perishing body, the soul, the spirit, that never-dying intelligence, was alive and active ; during this display and exhibition of the unconscious casket, the jewel, that brilliant relic, more precious than a thousand worlds, was still sentient ; the spirit, the only important part of man, had fled from

this, but was alive, active, and more than ever intelligent ; where ?

But the widow, or widder, (as Mr. John now designated his step-mamma,) some time before Mr. G.'s decease lived with her husband and daughters in a pretty modern villa, some short distance from Mr. John's, and which residence she had furnished with the most modern and fashionable furniture that could be obtained, for, said Mrs. G., "I don't care a straw for the old dusty, rusty, musty, fusty, antique chairs and tables, covered with the dirt and mildew of some fifty years of vulgar business ;" she did not care a rap, she repeated, for the old English oak, and made little opposition to Mr. John retaining the old clock and weather-glass, and a few other friends, with which he had been associated from a boy ; she merely snapped her fingers and struck her pocket, at the same time remarking, "Mahogany and walnut are far more genteel." She also kept two servant-maids, to whom she exhibited a distant and haughty bearing, remembering that when in a like position, her master kept but one of the class, and declared, when complaining of their shortcomings, that "were it not for the gentility of the thing, she would not suffer one of the lazy crew near her ; but gentility," she observed, "must be kept up. And then again,"

she continued, "there are the Miss G.'s, who are now learning all the accomplishments, therefore cannot be expected to lend a hand in household duties; indeed, the Miss G.'s must not be permitted to do any such thing, for if such were allowed, away would fly all their gentility, which had cost so much to acquire. And then, poor dear girls," she remarked with a becoming sigh, "the time is fast approaching when they must be thinking of suitable matches, and it would shock any genteel young man to observe an awkward walk, or press a hard hand, and then their prospects would be blighted for ever, and they might in all probability," she observed, "remain as long unmarried as she had herself; and it had always been her maxim, to get young people early engaged, for it interested her much to observe young folks walking together for a year or two in love, then the young man, really and truly stepping up to the mark, full of honourable intentions, naming the happy day; all this, she remarked, caused a stir, and looked highly genteel. I know," she added, "that the late Mr. G. never agreed with such appearances; but then, poor dear, he lived in far less showy times, and his youth had been spent in dull money-getting business, and he, poor dear, experienced a difficulty in coming up to the genteel; he never could

be made to understand parties and company, with all the other refined doings of the present day ; no, all he knew, poor dear man, was how to get money, not how to spend it in a refined and rational manner." And so the widow proceeded, determining on being very fashionable, and very genteel.

Mr. John's business continued prolific, and his fields and orchards grateful in the highest degree. There were no drawbacks, in the shape of rents, mortgages, or anything whatever ; but this is not a state of unalloyed happiness, and so Mr. John experienced. He did not trouble much about the widder and the gals ; but there was one thing that did trouble him, and that most sorely and constantly ; it was, as it were, for ever staring him in the face, and all owing to one little clause in his father's will, had it not been for which, he did not know a drawback to his complete happiness.

Yes, reader, at present Mr. John had no son, no heir ; and however preposterous it may appear to you, however absurd the idea may appear, there is a feeling in man, that delights him to think that when he can hold on no longer to the things of this life, he has some one of his own name and nature to leave them to, and to perpetuate his memory. Such feeling had Mr. John ; but

he had no son ; and as he passed the widow's cottage every day, at the usual hour, dressed in the usual dress of gabardine, leathern buskins, and napless hat, in order to inspect his orchards, he fancied he heard a soft voice, issuing from the crevices of the window, saying, " Yes, girls, perhaps those very fields and orchards will one day be yours." Thoughts like these were spears and daggers to Mr. John, and he would press his teeth, jerk his head, and rub his hands nervously together, as he hastened his speed, repeating as he did so, " No, they sha'n't ; no, they sha'n't ; not a stick or stone on't, if I can help it." In the same manner, too, he would perambulate his fields, accompanied by his two canine friends, his constant companions, calculating his profits, and projecting his plans, when suddenly he would stop, and beating the air with his hand, commence, " Why, how odd it seems ! My father had a son, and his father had a son ; the property has been in our name from time immemorial, but here it ends ; I have no son, no, I have no heir ; true enough, it must now depart, now pass to new names. Shocking ! terrible ! I can't bear the idea, I hate the thought ; it makes me angry ; it is too much to be endured." After many years' musing in this way, fortune appeared about to favour him even in this particular, for there was

unmistakeable evidence, so the story ran, that very soon preparations would have to be made at Mr. John's for the reception of a little stranger,—that very soon would have to be called into action the whole retinue of welcoming friends,—as nurses, doctors, and gossips,—to meet on some auspicious morn a little addition, who in due time arrived, and whom we shall dare to call "Little Uncertainty." A comet is an uncertainty, because we know not the time when, nor the place whence it comes ; the wind is an uncertainty, because it bloweth where it listeth, apparently obeying no settled laws of nature, as the tides, planets, and the like. So we make bold to designate Mr. John's baby, "Little Uncertainty," because he came when all thoughts of such an advent had been given up ; yes, came to smile on Mr. John, and call him father, and not only a baby ; but a real son and heir ; yes, an indisputable heir to "Wisdom's Acres."

"I'm glad on't, I'm glad on't," said Mr. John, "because this nicks the widder ; she can't ride the high oss now, she won't be able to give that confounded sneer as I pass her willa ; and if so, what care I ? It's all right now, I say ; the widder and the gals shall never have a stick or stone on't ; no, they are nicked, they are done. Now I'll plant trees, I'll rebuild the old barn, I'll put a

new fence round Wisdom's Acres ; everything necessary shall now be accomplished."

The thick cloud that overshadowed Mr. John's path had passed away—and been dispersed by a little son.

The news spread like wildfire ; numbers came to congratulate Mr. John on the birth of an heir ; the three bells in the tower were set ringing ; and in the evening Mr. John marched off to the Fox and Hounds, to receive again the congratulations of his friends and neighbours ; and what with proposing toasts, and returning thanks for the same, combined with the excellent punch and the narcotic fumes, by the time the clock struck the hour of ten, Mr. John had become quite headified ; in fact, on no former occasion had he ever been so overwhelmed ; and at twelve, in company with his friends, made his way home as well as could have been expected on such an occasion.

But during this ado and excitement there lay Little Uncertainty, quite unconscious of all the rejoicings and festivities that greeted his birth. There he lay, a small lump of humanity, with large head, full face, and flat features, void of any particular characteristic appearance, waiting for old Time to add his distinctive lineamental touches ; there he lay, looking vacantly at the

ceiling, and thrusting, after many failures, his little chubby fists into his toothless little mouth ; there he lay, similar to the young hippopotamus when first brought to this country, expanding and fattening by the plentiful supply of nourishment purveyed for him by Dame Nature ; there he lay, ever and anon varying the scene by an occasional small cry, which the M.D. declared tended to expand the lungs and strengthen the chest. But his own mother kindly undertook to be his nurse ; she never thought of answering one of the advertisements which frequently appear in the 'Times,' from persons anxious to become foster-mothers, and who are over-careful to particularize in minutiae. Surely ladies requiring the assistance of such individuals to help them do that which Nature intended should be done by themselves, would be satisfied with a far less description, less degrading to the advertiser, and more in unison with the more refined feelings of the employer. There he lay, watched by the anxious mother, who patiently waited the dawning of the first beam of intelligence manifested in first recognition of her who bore him ; there he lay, innocent and helpless, as had all men before him, the great and small, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, courageous and cowardly ; the Cæsars, the Alexanders, the Welling-

tons, the Nelsons, the Shakspeares, the Humboldts, the Newtons. What a deal of thought and speculation might be spent on an infant! The bud is beautiful, what will be the flower? Will it exhale a sweet perfume, or noxious vapour? Will it, like the beauteous rose, smell sweet, even in decay; or like the fabled upas, spread around a deadly poisonous malaria? Will he be a patriot, a philanthropist, or the scourge of his fellow-man? Will he be honourable or dishonourable, honest or dishonest, intellectual or stupid? Will he advance to the highest pinnacle of human worth, or sink to the lowest depths of degradation? Will he die the death of the just and righteous, or the degraded, cast out, unfriended criminal? Let us not ignore these thoughts! all grades are human; all co-existing numbers are found in every rank. Yon poor wretched, friendless convict, awaiting the awful moment in yonder cell, to whom every tick of the clock proves a source of terror, as it imperceptibly warns him of the shortness of life; and starting and springing at the sound of his chain, or the crack of his door, expecting the dread executioner to fulfil the law's last demand upon him,—was once a beautiful, lovely, interesting infant, fondled and cherished by an indulgent and proud mother. He was that; but now is this!

CHAPTER IV.

“ Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
 With fixed considerate face,
 And puzzling set his puppy brains
 To comprehend the case.”

Cowper.

BUT Mr. John considered Sundays and week-days much in the same light. “He never’d kept Sunda’ (Sunday) clothes,” he observed, as he seldom went to church, having left the care of his future in the hands of the pa’son (parson), to whom he prided himself in paying regular and full tithes. “Religion,” he remarked, “he considered only fit for poor imbecile men, weak women, and little children ; but for men of business, for money-making, the system was entirely at variance, not at all adapted to that end, but quite the contrary. He could not see why his neighbour Browne should not keep open his shop, at any rate before church on Sunday morn-

ings; he could not see why "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy" should not be infringed, not considering that the infringement of one would argue the infringement of the whole; and that "Thou shalt not steal" would soon mean only a little, and so on through the whole Decalogue. This was a sort of ignorant daring that suited Mr. John's tastes and habits exceedingly,—little thinking at the same time, of the loss he was sustaining, and what a robber he was of his own spiritual happiness. In this respect, in the midst of his plenty, Mr. John was far more to be pitied than the poor Indian, who believes and trusts in a long and happy futurity. It must be so; the soul of man is ordained for a far higher existence; the things of this life are merely toys and baubles, and can never satisfy an intelligent being, constituted to be the companion of angels, the guest of the highest intelligences; for such to be satisfied in this way would resemble a person travelling to some beautiful and lovely city, in order to view its grandeur and enjoy its society, but lingers on the road that leads to the same, overcome by the flowers and trifles by which the banks are ornamented. Without this glorious anticipation, if all his thoughts are reduced to, and concentrated upon, the small unsatisfactory toys of this passing scene, intended

merely as the road to another and far better,—then having assumed a false position, the man in the midst of his so-called plenty remains miserable and unhappy. However some may stifle the feeling, all have implanted in them the idea and desire at times, for something superior to the present. The untaught heathen exhibits this in a degree. Is he satisfied with his present hunting, fishing, and warlike excitements? No; he sometimes longs after the unseen, the supernatural and immortal; which he, in his ignorance, construes and embodies in natural and tangible objects; as the sun and moon, the thunder's roar or lightning's flash; and to these his fancied objects pays his regular devotions:

“Lo the poor Indian, whose untutored mind,
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind.”

Yes, and in these his deities he trusts, as having the power to transport him, after his present existence, to happier joys; which his contracted imagination has depicted as fairer hunting-grounds; elysian fields; a wider and less confined state; a state of immortality! Man, wherever found, does not believe in annihilation!

Now, as before remarked, Mr. John was constantly attended in his peregrinations by two canine friends, who were ever ready to do his

bidding and obey his orders ; they were indeed dogs worthy of the master, and so he thought ; but, at the same time, the dread of every small cur and little urchin ; and every grimalkin flew at their approach, in wild excitement, known by their vehement barking, and the occasional scream of a luckless victim, swept down in their journeys to or from Wisdom's Acres.

The smaller dog was a little rough terrier, whose countenance betrayed a full development of the lower and more sensual faculties, without possessing the least proof of their being governed in any way by the superior and more intellectual. He was a sly, mean, malevolent, quarrelsome little whelp that ever followed the heel of a master, and which bore the name of "Snarl." The other was a long-bodied, strong-built, liver-coloured brute, of savage aspect, of no one particular breed ; but possessing the nature and qualities of bloodhound and lurcher ; so that in the manufacture of this article Mr. John had to him two very essential qualities combined, viz. savageness and speed. This combination bore the appropriate name of "Panther," in short "Pan ;" she was the most ill-natured animal that could well be conceived, and the only dog Bob ever knew that after weeks of his proffered friendship, would treat all his advances with a studied

contempt, and threaten with a show of her teeth the attempted caress. As before remarked, this pair of quadrupeds were the terror of the neighbourhood. The little Snarl would be sure to pick a quarrel with some one or something ; and when in danger of being worsted, Pan would come sweeping down like an avalanche, making short work of the business. These propensities, however, evidently pleased the owner exceedingly, and at times afforded him much amusement. But they had made themselves many enemies, some of whom were unmarried ladies, who were constantly wishing and hoping that something might suddenly happen to the pests, as they designated them, and the whole town rid of such a public nuisance ; for, as before remarked, these animals were dreadful enemies to pet cats ; and when Puss, as was her usual custom in the summer afternoon, sat at the door enjoying the sun, and observing the passers to and fro, away would come the dogs with their usual sweep, and one day in this manner Pan caught Miss Jeff's black Tom Sambo by the neck, and severed his spine in an instant. Another charge against this animal was, that she one day caught Miss Tomkins's pet cat Ralph ; and had it not been for his powerful claws, which he dug into the eyes of his enemy, he would most certainly have lost his

life ; as it was, however, he only lost his tail, which ornamental appendage he lamented to his dying day. But perhaps the most serious charge the ladies had against Pan was, that she had taken a favourite pug-dog, belonging to Miss Knight, by the scruff of the neck, and held him in the river till quite dead. This Pan really did. But so far as Pan was concerned, the ladies were harmless enemies ; but she had a deadly foe in the person of the great man's keeper, who had long owed her a bill which, he observed, he was most anxious to settle ; Pan, on the contrary, being quite as anxious not to come to any formal payment.

Pan was also the dread of all boys, Bob not excepted in this particular, and in this she much resembled her master. Often when left alone in the orchard, Mr. John gone into the shed or up into the hay-loft, Pan would keep moving round Bob as if on sentry ; go ever and anon staring him in the face, as much as to say, "What do you here?" and every moment he expected her at his throat, and a great relief it was to see Mr. John's buskins and the tail of his gabardine, as he descended the ladder again. To endeavour to make friends with her was, as before stated, entirely useless. She, as her master said, hated boys ; and as she and her leader walked

to the orchard every morning, in order to see if they could catch any of the race, he would say, "Pan, we'll catch the rogues, won't we, girl? we'll have them presently." Pan would jump round in a sort of centrifugal twist, barking and rejoicing, as much as to say, "Yes, Master, I am ready, I am ready."

Now, as before remarked, Mr. John was fond of this dog, but universally hated boys. So one day he came to Bob, and in a very formal and solemn manner, commenced, "Youngster, you see that dog?" pointing to Pan. Bob answered in the affirmative. "Well, then," said he, "I never saw anything with fur on that that quadruped was ever afraid on; but as for man, she is a regular man-hater; and boy-eater. Yes, boys," said he, looking very evil; "she would swallow them whole if she could, she would turn them inside out, and outside in again, like an eel-skin or an old stocking, she would, upon my ——, I'll be —— if she wouldn't." He need not have added that, for Bob believed every word of it, but sometimes doubted whether he possessed that better part of man. If he had said too upon my body, Bob would have understood him immediately, for there really was six feet of the tangible substance before him in all its physical importance. But this, he said, like many persons who, feeling the weakness of their argu-

ment, make up for the same by creating awe. "Look," he continued, "at these teeth," at the same time opening her jaws with his broad hands, much in the same manner that Van Amburgh the lions; "there are cutters for you, that would separate steel; here are tearers for you, before which leather would be as rags; and as for her grinders, why, they are harder than the nether millstone; bones would be crushed like reeds by them. This is the crettur, this the locomotive, this the moving trap that I shall let loose on any boys I catch bird's-nesting, nutting, blackberrying, appling, mushrooming, or any I catch playing at that infernal game called 'hare and hounds,' jumping over my hedges and ditches." This he said, not that he had any fear of Bob transgressing in this particular; Bob knew too well the qualities of Pan for this mistake, but it was intended as a sidewind, to blow Mr. John's resolution and determination to the rest of the race, whom he could never reach with his voice.

But poor Pan's days were numbered. The subtle keeper before alluded to had been on the watch some time, expecting in all probability that she would be tempted one day to follow the hare or rabbit off Wisdom's Acres, on to the property of his master; and very soon this misfortune actually occurred; she, in full cry, followed the

game into a little copse, known as Nut-crack Bourn, where, on rounding an aged beech, where the keeper lay in ambush, he, without any feeling of sorrow or remorse, with steady hand and truer eye, stretched poor Pan dead under a noble oak, the leaden messenger having entered her heart ; and after giving a slight turn of the eye and movement of the tail, as she observed little Snarl in full retreat, with one struggle expired. But the little bully Snarl, the first to commence the fatal hunt, returned to the orchard with compressed tail and chap-fallen countenance, ever and anon turning in the direction of the said catastrophe, which told Mr. John too plainly that Pan had met her fate. Yet he hoped for the best, as he awaited her return, with little Snarl, lying at his feet, looking in the direction of Nut-crack Bourn ; thinking that perhaps she might yet return, with nimble feet and pendent tongue, Snarl ever and anon giving a small whine, then rising up would sniff the ground, take a few paces to and fro, and again another suppressed whine, which rose from the very depths of his body. But Pan came not, and little Snarl mourned as one who had lost a protector indeed. The confirmed tidings at length reached Mr. John, and every one remarked that they had never seen him so cut up under any circumstances. " Yes,"

he repeated, as he walked home ; “ poor Pan ! thou wast indeed an excellent crettur, thy like I shall never see again ; thy feet were swift to do my bidding ; thy full-cry note to me was the sweetest music ; thy enemies hated thee, and well they might, for fawning to strangers was not thy defect, and fear never made thy acquaintance.”

During Mr. John’s lamentation over Pan, the boys, however, and plus-meridian ladies in particular, were quietly rejoicing over her sudden demise. The ladies remarked that the executioner deserved a name, a remembrance never to be forgotten in the annals of modern heroism. “ To think,” said they, “ that he should have succeeded so well not only in shooting the pest, but killing her quite dead ! ”

“ Yes,” said Miss Tomkins, “ the bloodthirsty savage that severed my poor Ralph’s tail, making him go mourning all his days ; that useful and ornamental appendage. Oh ! I am so glad, I feel quite delighted, as glad as if any one had left me a little fortune ; in fact, I feel in ecstasies at the result.”

“ Yes, indeed,” said Miss Jeff ; “ it is not long since that cruel, that detestable, that voracious creature cracked my poor Sambo’s spine, causing his immediate death. Poor thing ! what he must have suffered in those few moments, no tongue

can tell. I almost fancy I hear the smashing of his bones now, poor dear; but the cruel fiend has met her turn at last now. Yes, these things will come home, sure to come home."

"Do you remember?" commenced Miss Knight, "when that relentless, cruel, awful, oh! what shall I say, whelp, drowned my dear, dear, darling Pug by holding him in the horsepond?" (Miss Knight wept.) "Dear! dear! dear! such a wretch as that, such a serpent I scarcely ever saw or heard of; and this I say, that the good man who relieved the town of such a scourge deserves well of his country, and ought immediately to have a medal presented to him by the Royal Humane Society; for who knows but that such a demon would one day transfer her glut from poor dear dumb things to some dear innocent little child? I say, Miss Jeff, that a public subscription should at once be entered into, and the amount presented to the dear man in public, as an example worthy of imitation by other young men, to encourage them in displaying like fortitude on like occasions."

The boys were thunderstruck! So much astonished were they, that for a time they scarcely said anything, but merely looked at each other in amazement, for they never doubted but that Pan, so renowned, would run any gauntlet, free from

every danger, and although glad in themselves that Pan was out of the way, yet felt a degree of awe, when thinking over the circumstance, more than might have been imagined. Then one would commence—

“I say, Charley, won’t Mr. John be sorry, eh? he’ll never get another dog like that; do you remember how soon she caught the hare in the orchard? And do you remember the day she caught and killed the badger?”

“Yes, yes, yes,” said Sammy Small; “and when she tore down Billy Jenkins, and ripped up his trousers,—oh my! didn’t he holler? didn’t he shout? That cost Mr. John five pounds for the doctor.”

“Yes,” said Teddy Wilks; “and don’t you remember when she drowned Miss Knight’s poor, poor little pug, by holding him under the water?”

At which reminiscence, the whole burst out into a fit of laughter they could not well restrain, but not sufficiently loud for the said lady to hear. Still, as before remarked, they were glad she was gone; for now Wisdom’s Acres could be crossed without fear; they could cut across the orchards without danger. But boys are peculiar beings, they admire a courageous and savage animal; boys respect that they fear most, and after all, they would much rather have heard that

Pan had been secured by a long stout chain, than that she had been swept off the face of the earth by the rude hand of the keeper. So they ended the painful subject by repeating, "Mr. John will never have her like again." And in this Mr. John agreed with them. And the only consolation he could get, was in admiring her likeness hanging over his parlour mantelpiece, she and little Snarl, taken by the local artist, some months anterior to the fatal termination, just in the act of leaving home for the morning *détour*.

"Yes," said Mr. John, as he contemplated the likeness, "it is much like her indeed; there is that beautiful interesting scowl on the countenance, that pretty rising of the upper lip, exhibiting her snowy ivories; that frown means courage, and no friendship to intruders. Pan, Pan, I shall never see thy like again!"

Soon, however, Mr. John was observed again, at the usual time, in the usual dress, wending his way to the fields, accompanied by little Snarl only, who, now that his second was gone, behaved himself in a much more polite and becoming manner, on passing through the village. As master and dog, passed, however, the boys would stop their play, and observe to each other the absence of Pan; the ladies likewise to whom we have alluded, would stop their knitting, and peep-

ing from behind their window curtains, in order to have ocular demonstration of the fact, would then return from the windows with uplifted hands, repeating, "'Tis true, 'tis true ! Panther is dead, Panther is dead !"

Well would it be however, if the game and its protecting laws ended only in the death of an occasional dog ; this, alas ! is not the case. Mr. John's dog was killed, and there was an end, so far, to the business. Pan had broken the law, and died a traitor's death. Mr. John stood in this respect in rather an awkward position, his small portion of land, known as Wisdom's Acres, being surrounded by the great man's thousand hides ; in fact, he was entirely insulated by his more wealthy neighbour, who had taken every means, fair and foul, to oblige Mr. John to part with this property ; it stood in the midst of his great neighbour's property, a great eyesore, preventing him standing and observing to his friends, as he swept his arm and cast his eyes across the boundless tract, " I am monarch of all I survey." Here he was obliged, in strict honesty, to introduce the clause, " except that farm yonder ;" therefore it was, he wanted Mr. John to sell it to him ; which reason made Mr. John, on the contrary, more desirous than ever to keep the property, and indeed, according to his father's will, it would have been

attended with much difficulty to make arrangements for disposing of Wisdom's Acres. The game, too, of his neighbour was constantly passing into Wisdom's Acres, and Mr. John strictly prohibited any one following the same ; but never scrupled to destroy the trespassers himself ; so by these many little misunderstandings, the land-owners became very unpopular with each other, which eventually ended in the death of Pan.

What misery does covetousness and a large eye create ! Russia makes war on Turkey, making the refusal of a paltry key the excuse, involving England, France, and others, in an endless expense, and to mourn the loss of their bravest sons, consumed in checking her voracious appetite. It is the fable of the wolf and lamb acted over again.

Well would it be, I repeat, did the game laws end only in the death of an occasional dumb animal ; but unfortunately, this is not the case. Many, very many, are the men who have lost their lives, or been sent across the ocean, as the result of the game laws.

Perhaps the reader might be tempted to view all poachers in the light of highwaymen, robbers, murderers, etc. Not so ; many of them passed in rural society for respectable men ; many of them, in fact, were young farmers, but following a false

line of reasoning, a mistaken thread of argument, had persuaded themselves that game should be free for all, upon which frail foundation they acted. Undoubtedly such might be the case under different circumstances, for instance, in the wild and unclaimed wastes of Africa or America, where the animals are free, and no law protects them ; but in this country the case bears no comparison. In England every rood of ground acknowledges its owner, who has a perfect right to keep thereon whatever animals he pleases, and no one should find fault with his arrangement in this respect, so long as he keeps them on his own estate ; and more than this ; he has a law to protect him in so doing ; the knowledge of this alone should be sufficient to curb the feelings from wishing to indulge in this unlawful excitement, as the breaking of the law will, sooner or later, be paid with the greatest retribution ; besides, as the law exists, the breaking of the same will be attended with bad moral effect ; it is an outrage on the law of our country, which, as good citizens, we are bound to obey. Poaching renders a man less disposed to obey any law ; in short, it is a downward step in morality, and for what ? Merely a paltry hare or bird ; for which the poacher more or less neglects his business ; and by practising which, his wife and family are constantly kept in

a state of alarm and terror. Is it worth the night watchings ; the deep and carefully-laid schemes to frustrate the scrutiny of the keepers ? Is it any wonder a mind so trained, when a ruined home and family stare him in the face, or, game failing, that the poacher resorts to some other yet more dishonest means of support ? The game laws are doubtless odious, and a good thing would it be were they expunged from England's code, rendering men less ambitious to find excitement in that which they are denied.

Not far from this spot took place that memorable encounter between the poachers and keepers, which at first created the greatest excitement, but subsequently, the deepest gloom, throughout the country. It appears a notorious poacher had been caught by the keepers, committed, sentenced, and at last transported to Botany Bay ; his associates, considering the punishment too severe, determined on being openly revenged on his informers and prosecutors, and resolved the same should take place at midnight in the month of January, 18—, before which, they decided on sending a letter to the noble lord, the master of the keepers, which read as follows :—

“ West Wood, January, 18—.

“ My Lord,

“ We, the undersigned, feeling greatly ag-

grieved at your late conduct, respecting one of our number, a professed poacher, otherwise an honest man, named William Townsend, who has left a wife and six children in this country to mourn his absence,—we have determined to revenge his punishment, not by slaying one head of game merely, but a hundredfold ; this we will not do secretly, but apprise your lordship of the fact. This night, at the midnight hour, with the slaughtered game, in the middle of West Wood, under the clump of trees, well known to your Lordship by the title of the ‘Seven Saxons,’ at the hour of twelve, we may be found. Look you out your most valiant and gallant keepers ; let them come and take from us that game which in this country is monopolized by your lordship, but which God intends for all.

“(Signed) JOHN HARDMAN, }
 “ THOMAS FEARLESS, } Leaders.”

CHAPTER V.

“Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself;
It cannot be called our country
But our grave.”

Shakespeare.

THE principal keeper, having collected his men, commenced the journey; when, after having advanced many miles through narrow defiles and dark and dirty lanes, arrived at last within the vicinity of the well-known wood mentioned in the letter. The wood being belted round with thorns, briars, and other brushwood, woven together with the parasitical plants of ages, presented an almost impenetrable barrier to the ambitious explorer; and it was with the greatest difficulty the men forced a passage through this natural fortification; and not, indeed, without suffering some severe scratches and fractures from the overhanging thorns and dog-roses. On entering,

however, the road became somewhat more open, and travelling less fatiguing to the keepers. Presently, their leader broke silence by observing,

“Methinks we have got in at the wrong side, it seems to me a mighty long way to the ‘Seven Saxons;’ methinks we should have entered at the north end, but my head and eyes are mighty dizzy to-night; don’t seem to know the place as I ought, somehows. The moon will be up a little more presently a may be, and we shall get on better.”

A little further, and by the light of the moon, could be seen the “Seven Saxons,” towering high and nobly above the surrounding forests, like huge giants, overtopping the pigmy inhabitants of the endless wilderness.

“A few moments more, and we shall be right on ’um,” said the leader.

The rest made no reply.

“Hush! hark!” said the leader again; “I think I hear the sound of voices carried along on the wind. Hark! I hear it again. It is as from fellows merry with wine. Halt!”

The keepers, after the first sound of the distant enemy, sat down on the stump of an aged oak, and calmly refreshed themselves with a little brandy and oat cake, provided by each in his pocket.

“Now put your heads down to the ground, and listen if you can make anything out they are saying,” said the head keeper. “Well, what do ye hear?” he inquired again.

“Nothing; can make nothing out they are saying; they seem mighty merry, all talking and laughing together, bother to ’um! These, sure, can’t be the men that are expecting a deadly encounter; these can’t be the fellows we are to take bound to the castle, as me lord said; I wish mightily me lord could hear ’um; now I do.”

“Put your ear down to the ground again,” said the keeper. “Eh, what? Can’t make anything out; a mixture of voices, all talking together as before. Ah, I see, too far off; we’ll advance closer to the spot. Advance! Hullo, Spring, what are you a’ter there, starting in that fool’s way?” inquired the head keeper again.

“Oh! nothing; nothing; I only thought I saw something, a hare or rabbit, may be; nothing more, nothing more.”

“Thought thou sidst something, indeed,” said the leader. “Depend upon it, Spring, thou wilt never see anything worse than thyself.”

“Well, Smigs,” said the keeper again, “and what the tarnations are you a’ter there, tumbling about as if drunk or shot?”

“Why, I only caught my foot in a rabbit’s

hole; nothing more, nothing more," said Smigs.

"What's that?" inquired the foreman again.

"Only an old owl," replied his second; "got a nest in that hollow tree, I reckon."

But the journey through the wood proved long and tiresome; and when the moon submerged herself, as she frequently did, the road became somewhat intricate and uncertain.

"Hold!" said the leader; "there they are, and no mistake. Yes, there I see one of the rascals moving about with a drinking-horn in his hand, the rest are sitting in a circle. Get up on this stump," he continued, "and you will see them too. Bother the fellows! I thought, upon my life now, that they were hoaxing on us, I did, but it looks a mighty deal more than that now. Do you all see?" he inquired.

"Yes, we all see," responded the rest.

"Now, then," he commenced again, "are you all ready, guns and pistols loaded, and swords by your sides?"

"All ready," replied the men.

"Then be firm and bold," said the chief; "show your courage; depend upon it, it is no trick, but they mean all they said in that there letter to me lord. I wish the postman had lost it on the road, I do; but now on we must go; no flinching;

either they or we must be beaten ; blood will flow this night, but the most active and courageous will be the victors. Onward ! onward then ! march boldly, but mind, let theirs be the first shot ; then, after I have ordered them to surrender, up and take 'um, dead or alive. Now then I repeat, onward, march boldly to the Seven Saxons ! ” and in a few moments the keepers were in full view of the poachers.

True too true, there they were. It was no hollow boast, no childish deception, but action, real action ; there they were, surrounded by a huge heap of game, consisting of hares, pheasants, and partridges, taken in their nocturnal enterprise. The poachers, a bold, stalwart set of men, were dressed in the usual velveteen shooting-jackets (over which their shot-belts and powder-flasks were crossed), flat felt hats, and leathern buskins completed their attire. Their faces were disfigured ; and their guns lay, for the time, harmlessly by their sides ; in addition to which, a brace of pistols peered out significantly from their waist-belts. One of them, the captain of the gang, was engaged filling a horn from a bottle which he handed to his companions.

“ The time is up,” he commenced ; “ will they forget the hour, delay the moments ? ”

And as the horn passed, they swore allegiance

to each other, and determined opposition to the game laws.

"We swear," said the captain, taking the horn, "we swear to be one in body, one in mind, one in action; never to flinch or fly, so long as one of our number is exposed to danger."

"We swear!" responded the rest.

"We swear," he continued, "to oppose, now and for ever, the obnoxious game laws; and to put down every opposition in this discharge of our duty."

"We swear!" responded the rest.

"Gentlemen," he commenced, again taking the horn, "this is a prelude to a very uncertain sequel; but I say—and you will all respond—Success to the enterprise!"

"Success to the enterprise! Success to the enterprise!" responded the whole. After which they joined in a verse of the poachers' chorus, as follows—

"One in body, one in mind,
We the poachers are resign'd;
Keepers come, your rights maintain,
The poachers never will complain."

"Hark! Listen! Hark!" said the speaker again; "I hear the approach of footsteps. Did you not hear the crackling of thorns? Hush! I hear it again. Hurrah! hurrah! They come!"

they come ! they are here ! Gentlemen, to your feet ! to your arms ! Eh, there ! who advances ?”

“We,” commenced the keeper, “are the authorized preservers of the game belonging to the noble lord our master, who, through us, demands that you and your party will at once surrender.”

“Indeed !” commenced the poacher ; “indeed ! Thy lord and master, thy absolute despotic governor, demands by you—his vassal slaves—that we shall one and all surrender, eh ? Hark ye, man ; think you your lord and master saw any indecision, any tameness, irresolution, or weakness in that epistle received by him from us this day, that he has resolved—the poor resolve—of sending you, his wretched crawling dependants,—more cringing than the reptile worm that crawls at evening in the public path ? The reptile worm would turn, where you would sink lower and still lower in mean submission. You resemble more the miserable, hungry, ill-used hound, crouching and sinking at his oppressor’s feet. Like him, you would lick the hand that whipped you sore. Surrender to you, eh ? Why came he not himself ? Why heard we not his powerful and elastic voice, echoing through the natural caves and arches of this noble wood, the word ‘Surrender !’ That voice which makes you start

and tremble, might well be heard again. Why came he not himself? He heads the hunt, he slays the cunning fox; the death 'Whoo-hoop!' is heard proceeding from his lungs throughout yon hill and dale. He kills his feathered subjects without scruple; in multitudes they fall unheeded; the timid hare is stretched by him, without a thought, upon her native turf. Ay, mark me, man, the timid hare knows no revenge; the golden-painted pheasant is merely a pet toy, he kills at pleasure; and Reynard sly escapes, perchance he may, the piercing eye of his pursuer. Here's no return, no strife, no warm exciting conflict, but cold—cold death. Your noble lord bids me, and all of us, surrender. Shrouded in yonder castle walls secure, he hurls his edicts forth, as well he may, being safe from every harm. Why came he not this night? Did the soft bed, with purple canopy, entice him to be wise? Or did he see a conflict too severe for his weak nerves? See you this heap of game? It's not long since it was nominally his, your noble lord's, but now, it's really ours. They were all tame things; they fired no shot, they struck no blow, but quietly yielded up their lives to their superior—man. Your noble master thinks perhaps we much resemble them; but know full well, the hands that brought them low can well

resist in their defence. Advance, I say, no further, if you value life ; if any dear in this wide world, if any wife be waiting thy return, and children lisp thy name, and long to grasp thy knees ; if thou hast not thy last fond wishes made, advance,—I say, no further ! Behold those aged trees, those hearts of oak, o’ercanopying our heads ! Thou knowest they are strong ; but underneath their limbs, are hearts more stout than they, that tremble not, but will hold out in opposition to the very death. Advance, I say, advance no further ; or, by the light of yon pale moon, before she sinks in yonder pillowy horizon, you will, like her, go out.”

“Fire ! fire !” The order is obeyed. Bang, bang, bang ! crack, crack, crack ! The wood resounds, and echo sends it back ; all is in commotion ; the fox has left his lair, and barking seeks the repose of the adjoining copse ; the quick vibrations of the pheasant’s pinions are heard, as he wings his way to the opposite wood ; the owl and nighthawk encourage their mates with wild scream to hasten from the scene of conflict. But the head keeper fell not ! a little sapling birch received the charge too well aimed at him. Flash, flash ! bang, bang ! the whole force is again engaged. Two keepers have fallen, mortally wounded, and others severely. The

poachers, too, are sadly suffering, and many have fallen to rise no more, after exhibiting bravery worthy a better and more glorious cause, but fighting with the desperation of despair, prove themselves too strong; the keepers acknowledge the unequal contest, they retire, each party carrying away his dead and wounded. And the next day the remaining poachers surrender to take their chance of trial.

Reader, this is no fiction, no conjured imagination of the brain; but at the foundation of this tragedy are facts, stubborn facts; and often, the head keeper before alluded to, then an old and infirm man, has directed the author's boyish attention to the sapling hanging horizontally over his mantelpiece, perforated with the charge, on which he looked with the greatest gratitude and veneration, as the means, in the hands of Providence, by which his life was reserved.

The sentence having been pronounced, the poacher to whom we have frequently alluded requested permission to speak, which request having been granted, commenced, "My lord and gentlemen of the jury, you have this day done your duty, and upheld the laws of your country. I am justly sentenced, having been the leader of this fatal opposition, in consequence of which valuable and important lives have been sacrificed.

I know not whether I actually took another's life ; in the excitement and confusion of the moment it would be impossible for me to say ; if so, may He forgive me before whose just and impartial tribunal you are about to plunge me ! But this I say, as I am about to leave this world, that I would not be one of twelve honest men to carry out such measures, nor the judge to condemn such prisoners. This, gentlemen, is all I have to advance ; may my death, with those of others, ring through old England, country of my birth and death, and sap the foundation of these accursed laws !” The poacher and another companion were soon after executed, in the county town, in the presence of numerous spectators, whose sympathies were heartfelt.

Soon after the death of Pan, Mr. John called on Bob's father, commencing, “I say, Mr. What-decall,”—for, as before remarked, he could never remember names,—“I think I heard you say one day that you wanted to sell a oss ; now, as I am going to Chipton fair on Monday, to buy a few score ship if I can get them cheap, if you will send the youngster we'll ride together, and I'll sell the oss for you, and then maybe like, he'll help me home with the sheep, should I buy some.” So the business was settled, which was anything but agreeable news to Bob, as the horse

alluded to had been an especial favourite with his young master, having been in the habit of exhibiting great sagacity, and remarkable docility. The morning having arrived, Bob mounted his willing steed, as he anticipated, for the last time. "Little do you think," thought Bob as he mounted, "little do you think that you will never return to your stable again ; little do I or you know the usage you may receive from cruel, selfish, exacting hands." Bob felt likewise that it was a degradation to go and stand such an animal in the country fair for public competition ; it was Bob's first great trouble.

So Bob was thinking, when his companion broke silence by remarking, "I think, youngster, he'll go off well to-day, osses are dear ; do you think the governor," in allusion to Bob's sire, "would mind my chopping him away, if we can't sell the animal right out ? After the animal has been sold," he continued, "I should like you to help me with the ship, if I buy any."

"All right," replied Bob.

"And now," said Mr. John, "I think we had better trot the next two last miles, as time is pressing."

So off they trotted, until they arrived at the entrance of the town, when Mr. John put off at the sign of the "Black Horse." But Bob's

steed was destined to go a little further for public competition.

The fair had already commenced, proved by the usual chorus of the screaming pigs, the bellowing cattle, and bleating of sheep; with the barking of dogs, smacking of whips, and the constant shnah! shnah! shnah! "Out of the way there! out of the way there!" of the drivers, pressing their unwilling cattle through the *mélée*, to which might be added the trampling of horses, clattering of wheels, and hubbub of voices, constituting the same a perfect Babel, not soon to be forgotten. Bob pressed on through the bustle and crowd, to a stand he observed vacant, determined on waiting there until his business was concluded. But scarcely had he gained his position, when up came an elderly gentleman, in top-boots, a well-filled white waistcoat, drab smallclothes, and blue coat with brass buttons.

"Well, youngster, what now for the high-bred and low-fed?" he commenced.

"High-bred, if you please," answered Bob, "but low-fed never," feeling somewhat indignant at such a rude remark.

He smiled. "Well now, what's the price?" He inquired, "He appears tolerably sound; does he possess all the virtues of a horse without his vices?"

"I can warrant him sound, and free from vice," said Bob.

"Yes," he remarked, shaking his head and looking closely into the animal's mouth, "there's no knowing, no knowing, my lad; I have lived long enough, and have been taken in sufficiently in my time, to know that there's no confidence to be placed or honesty to be expected in horse-dealing. I always use my own judgment, and if that's out, why I expect to be taken in; but I think the animal will do," he continued, "if the figure is not too lofty; horses, you know, are cheap just now; but should I buy him he'll be well fed and kindly treated."

From the appearance of the bidder Bob judged such would be the case, however, on telling him the price,—

"Too much, too much," he replied, again looking at the animal; "I must wait a little longer;" and off he went, and Bob saw him no more.

No sooner had his comfortable friend gone, than up came two rough-looking men of the baser sort, in corduroy breeches, pipes in their mouths, and whips in their hands, with the latter of which one of them commenced at once touching up the pony.

"That's enough of that," said Bob.

"Lor bless us!" replied the man, "don't you

want to sell the quadruped ? You should show him out ; that gemman there wants just such a little figure, if you can agree as to the price ;” when, after examining eyes, mouth, and legs, “ How much,” said he, “ for the bow-legged, blear-eyed racer ?”

“ So much,” replied Bob, well knowing it would be beyond his figure.

Others likewise followed in rapid succession, all of whom commenced by at once depreciating the property they were at the same time most anxious to possess. “ It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer, but when he goeth away he rejoiceth.” Men, in this respect, are the same now as in the day of the wise man.

It appeared strange, however, to Bob’s young imagination, that men should be mean enough to follow such deceit, and practise such a lie. So he was thinking when again disturbed from his reverie by an uproar at his back, and the repetition of, “ You little villain ; you little rascal ; and whose boy are ye ?” And the thwack, thwack, of a stick, resounded in his ears, when, on looking round, he beheld an elderly farmer of the old school, administering this chastisement to a rosy-faced ploughboy, whom he had observed keeping up some half-dozen fat oxen for the inspection of the butcher ; in his hand he held a

long hazel rod, with a goad at the end, with which, it appeared, he had been amusing himself and the other ploughboys, when a crowd of farmers and butchers came to view, and a good opportunity presented itself, by touching with the point of the rod one of the animals in the flank, to which notice, the animal responded with a most determined kick on the leg of one of the inspectors, compelling the same to make a profound salaam, and utter words not acknowledged by Johnson, Walker, or any other lexicographer; but not suspecting the cause of the effect, hobbled off, declaring the animal the most vicious of brutes, without forming any idea of the primary author of the mischief. This sport, at the expense of his superiors, pleased young scapegrace exceedingly; but becoming more and more venturesome, and less cautious in returning the goad to its proper position, when the gentleman before alluded to passed up within the proper distance to take the most signal effect, the instrument was applied, and quick as thought smack went the bullock's foot against the burnished boot-top of the inspector of beef, overturning the wearer and making a sad ado, but on returning the goad the luckless wight knocked off the hat of another contemplator of fat cattle, in consequence of which misfortune the plot was discovered, the sequel to which being as before stated.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Well, Goody, don’t stand preaching now,
Folks don’t preach sermons at a fair ;
We’ve reared ten boys and girls, you know,
And I’ll be bound they’ll all be there.”

Bloomfield.

THE day advancing, the lads and lasses of the surrounding villages and hamlets, commenced arriving in their usual holiday attire, exhibiting as usual, a great proportion of red and white. Little boys paraded to and fro, beating drums, blowing trumpets, and clashing swords in quite a martial air. Sedate little girls, likewise, promenaded up and down, consequentially and maternally, presiding over their chubby-faced babies, each of Dutch extraction and manufacture. Two boys, too, presently passed, looking anything but comfortable, having, as appeared, been making too free with the wheel of fortune, which, in their case, turned in quite the opposite

direction; they had likewise, it seems, been dabbling with the thimble-riggers and garter-prickers, decoyed into the mistake by a fellow dressed in a white gabardine with cow-hair in his hat, who had, to all appearances, been successfully winning, apparently to the no small annoyance of the proprietor of the stand, but who, in reality, was one of the rogues in disguise, and merely acting the decoy-duck, to allure the simple and unwary. Sounds of every description again met the ear in a most painful and discordant manner,—as gongs from the peepshows, horns from the menageries, with bands from the itinerant theatres, the vociferations of showmen and exclamations of clowns,—constituted an uproar more easily understood than described.

“Just going to commence! just going to commence! Now closing! now closing!” during fully a half hour before any such thing was intended, when the doors, having been apparently closed, a rush would be made in order to secure sittings, which addition of spectators having been secured by their payments, delay in their case was not considered dangerous; so, having caged the birds, the manager would come forward to the edge of his stage, and, without any feeling of consideration for the waiting ones inside, commence again: “All alive! all alive! Walk up,

ladies and gentlemen, and see the great American jaguar, called the American man-eater,—an hanimal, ladies and gentlemen, found only on that extensive continent, and never appeared alive in this country before ; and this is the only travelling menagerie where this great cur'os'ty in the hanimal kingdom is to be seen ! Here also is a fine specimen of the orang-outang, or wild man of the wood, brought from Ceylon, East Indies, in Her Majesty's ship 'Boxer,' and purchased by the proprietor of this unrivalled exhibition at a very extravagant price. He is the largest of the monkey-tribe, and the one that most nearly resembles man ; he is, indeed, a most wonderful hanimal, taking his food in a sitting position, making use of a spoon in the exercise ; prepares his own bed like any clever chambermaid ; in fact, without any exaggeration, there is scarcely anything this living wonder could not perform. We believe him capable of talking, only the rogue fears we shall put him to work. Come up, I say, and see him ! Come up, and see the living wonder ! Come up, and see the wild man of the wood, caught in the island of Ceylon, East Indies ! The charge is only one penny, and the only hanimal of his kind travelling ! Here, too, are parrots and paroquettes, talking cockatoos and chattering monkeys ! Here, also, can be seen

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the laughing jackass from Australia and the native devil from New Zealand ; they are indeed most wonderful hanimals, and never exhibited alive before in this country ! The last worthy is a great enemy to poor harmless sheep. The little imp we have in the carriage had killed six, and was hanging on to a seventh, when, with the greatest difficulty, he was secured. The colonists gave him that significant title in consequence of his destructive propensities ! Walk up, I say, and see him ! Come up, and see the native devil of the antipodes, and the laughing jackass of New Zealand ! Walk up, I say, ladies and gentlemen ; the charge is only one penny, and the hanimals all alive ! Come up and see the great Asiatic python, taken in the act of swallowing a buffalo ! This monster was captured by the Malays, off the island of Borneo, East Indies. Walk up, I say, walk up ! Stand from the steps, you dirty boys, and let those nice, clean little fellows with the pennies burning in their hands pass up !” And flourishing the whip at once, commenced clearing the steps.

On the opposite side stood the itinerant theatre, with stage in front, on which the dancers and clowns were showing off their agility and comic wit, in no constrained manner, to open-mouthed countrymen, intently gazing on the

fairy-like ladies in gauze and muslin, and whom the clowns, out of compliment to their usual rustic diet, designated the men "Chaw-fats," a few of whom they managed to allure on the stage, in order to make sport of the same for the amusement of the crowd below in the following manner :—

First Clown.—"I say, Bill, how old are you?"

Second Clown.—"How old, didst say?"

"Ay, to be sure ; how old?"

"Why, twenty next dung-hauling, to be sure."

"I say, Bill, which is the way to Lon'on?"

"Which is the way, didst say?"

"Ay ay, Bill, anything you like?"

"Why, the way to Lon'on is up here, down there, across yonder, straight up the lane, that goes in and out like, and there yer are if you follow your nose right whip into the Lon'on Road?"

"Good boy, Bill, good boy. Now go home, and tell your sister all about the theatre," said Clown number one.

Then, calling up a few boys ambitious of public distinction, and placing them in a line on the stage, he commanded them all to lean back,—like soldiers, he observed, with a wink ; then, standing before the first, in order to see if the line proved straight, in a moment plunged his foot into the stomach of the first, which threw him on to the

second, and the second on to the third, and so on, until the whole line was scrambling about on the stage, to the no small amusement of the sight-seers; after which amusing scene, and all for nothing, the manager, a semi-genteel sort of personage, with very insinuating and condescending manners, would advance, and inform the public, "that this theatre was composed of the most celebrated comedians to be seen or heard, having only just concluded an engagement at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, where they had been performing with immense success; patronized by her Majesty and all the Royal Family; but, being anxious that the inhabitants of the provinces, and rural population in general, might likewise have an opportunity of enjoying this unrivalled treat, they intended performing in every village and town of any importance throughout the United Kingdom. The ladies and gentlemen of the company," he continued, "will this day perform that sublime drama, 'titled the 'Brigand's Wife;' after which that most amusing, laughable, and side-splitting comedy, 'My Wife's gone to Chobham.' Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are just going to commence, and, in order to meet the pockets of our country friends, the charge will be only threepence."

On the right of this erection stood the Bir-

mingham man, who styled himself "Cheap Jack," vociferating and addressing a large crowd from the front of his cart, inviting all to come and inspect the goods, which he declared to have purchased, but never intended paying for, or he could never afford to offer the same to the discerning public at that very low rate.

"Now, who will have this lot?" he commenced, holding up some half-dozen articles in his hand. "Who will have this lot, I say? Twelve, eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, sixpence. Sell it or never sell it, the lot for sixpence. I say, who would not spend sixpence for such a lot as this? I never saw such stubborn people in all my life! 'Pon my word now, I really think if I gave them the horse and cart, they would want me to drive it home for them. I do indeed; positively I do now. There are spoons for you! If they were in Wales next week, they would fetch more than the money; but they are not in Wales, but shall be sold in England, and this very day too! 'Pon my word and the honour of a gentleman, they shall! And then I add another article, and another, and another," at the same time dashing them one upon the other. "Now, who will have this valuable lot? Who? Very well, then; I will pass it on one side, and look for something more tempting,

more in accordance with the wants of the public. Only sixpence the whole! Very well, then, no buyer. Very well, then, I will return the same to the cart, and look for something else."

When up starts a man, in white gabardine, saying, "Here, let us have that lot."

"Have that lot? I should think so," said the salesman, returning from his cart again with another handful, *plus* another article, declaring that had his young friend seen the present he would not have purchased the past, the present lot containing more articles and of a better quality.

When up rises another countryman, evidently much disgusted with the whole proceeding, and calling out—

"Eh, there, you Brumingum; you take us for fools, don't ye? Don't standing hatching lies there. I say, shut up; lie down, you liar."

"What does the fellow say? What does the fellow mean?" commenced Cheap Jack. "What did he say? Hatching—hatching, did you say? my poor fellow. You think I am like one of your old geese, I presume; poor fellow, poor fellow, poor fellow!" said the salesman, "his ideas never soar beyond the pinions of a goose; don't say any more, my poor fellow!"

"Hold your jaw!" shouted the man again.

"It is a good thing," commenced Cheap Jack

again, " my poor fellow, that you are not living near a London cemetery, or they would have those teeth of yours for tombstones (in allusion to some rather more than prominent) ; 'pon my word now, they would—they would, indeed. Oh, what a set of teeth ! I say, ladies and gentlemen, I pity from my heart the poor ill-used man who finds him in his bread and bacon ; I do, indeed, feel quite sorry for him." So getting the laugh turned on his disturber, who had fled for refuge, when an opportunity occurred, without being observed, Cheap Jack returned from his cart again with another last lot ; only remarking as he did so that his cart was really hatching, and there was indeed no end of the chickens.

On Bob's left was a tall, gaunt-looking man, superintending a penny peep-show, exhibiting pictures of battle-pieces, and the like ; and who was proceeding with his description in a loud and sonorous voice ; and looking as important as if he really had been in the engagement he was attempting to describe to his juvenile audience, occupying the bulls' eyes. The Battle of Waterloo and Belshazzar's Feast appeared to be the principal subjects. " Look to the right," he commenced, " and on that hill, on the white horse, with a telescope in his hand, is General Bonaparte, the great warrior and scourge of man-

kind ; it is said that he shed more blood than would be enough to float the British navy, and that he ate up all the boys and girls he could get at, for breakfast every morning,—that, I say, is General Bonaparte. Look to the left, and there you will see, wearing a cocked hat, his great opponent and conqueror, Wellington.”

“Where ? where ?” inquired all the boys at once. “I can’t see anything like that.”

“Oh, stop a bit ; I see,” said the showman ; “I have been pulling the wrong string ; but just remember what I have been telling ye of Wellington,—and now there he is and no mistake. Well, as I was saying, Wellington is on the left, taken at the awful moment when he said, ‘Up, Guards, and at ’um !’ and there you see the red coats chopping and slashing up the French, of all the world like minced meat. The next picture, my little dears, is Belshazzar’s Feast, recorded in the Holy Bible, the Book of Daniel ; you know that it runs, that he made a great feast, and called together his lords and nobles, wives and concubines, to partake of that feast ; and he sent for the vessels of silver and gold taken out of the temple, to drink the wine out on. You see them all there, sitting round the table,—the King is at the top with his crown on, the Prime Minister on his right, and somebody else on his left, I for-

get his title ; but doesn't signify now. Down the table, dressed in the Eastern style, are all them beautiful ladies I told you on before. Daniel is standing at the bottom, and pointing to the writing on the wall ; you can't read it, nobody could but he,—but it went to say that the kingdom was departed from the king ; and that night the king were slain ! and that night the King were slain ! There that is all the pictures, my little dears ; and if any on ye ain't satisfied, call again to-morrow and have your pennies back. Walk up, walk up, my little dears, and see the Battle of Waterloo and Belshazzar's Feast."

Close to him stood a man managing a circular frame, upon which were fixed wooden horses, bearing the significant names of Swift, Fast, Sharp, Trot, etc. Some of the riders had already mounted their chosen steeds, and only awaited the proper centrifugal force, to be applied by boys ambitious to act in the capacity of primary movers, in order to send the ready riders on their endless journey. This knight of contracted locomotion likewise managed another machine, consisting of a monstrous vertical wheel, to which at convenient distances boats were attached, in such manner, so that as the wheel revolved, the boats continually sank so as to prevent them turning over ; this machine, indeed, appeared particularly con-

structed for the purpose of encouraging bilious feelings, having two very important principles tending to this end, viz. the centrifugal vertical movement, with the constant sinking—sinking of the boats in the aerial voyage. The boats fast filled, however, with young countrymen and women, some of whom, after a few turns, hung over the sides of the same, threatening instant unpleasantness to their friends swinging below.

It was likewise mop day as well as fair day. The origin of this word appears a little obscure,—it might perhaps have originated with the woolly head and birch handle, in allusion to servants being cleaners in every respect, more especially as it was customary, in some places, to assemble round an elevated mop, waiting to be hired,—this was called going to mop; or perhaps a corruption of mope-day, as the servants waiting to be hired, appeared in some instances a little mopish; some however argue that it is derived from the word *mappa*, applied by the Romans to their public games, because, when the games were to commence, the umpire ordered the *mappa* or napkin, with which he wiped his fingers, to be thrown up as a signal. ‘Map’ is derived from the same word, being sometimes made of cloth; so at these fairs, games being introduced, the word became applied to the time of hiring ser-

vants, as the servants, after being hired, indulged in little innocent or other amusements. But it was mop day, as well as fair day, and the managers of the horse and cow, in long white gabardines with whipcord, and cowhair in their hats, emblems of their particular calling, were standing about in different parts of the town ; their sisters likewise, of the dairy, with rosy cheeks and brawny limbs, were there, and, as they met and passed each other, cracked jokes or talked excitedly over the scenes of the farm or grange they had left, or speculated on the fresh, but improved situation. Near to Bob stood a farmer talking to one he had selected from the crowd at first sight, having taken a fancy to him from his physical appearance. The youth selected was a stout-built, compact, middle-sized man, apparently about one-and-twenty ; the farmer said he liked that size and age, they are generally stronger like, he remarked, and more up to their work ; the bigger ones, he observed, are more holler like, and want a deal more feeding, subject to ail more often, and it takes 'um a deuced long time to turn round.

“How old are ye, my man ?” inquired the farmer.

“Why, as near as I knows, I was twenty-three last Michaelmas,” replied the man.

"Strong fellow, I suppose?" said the farmer, eyeing him closely.

"Yes, Master; I don't know that ever I had the doctor in my life, at leastwise not that I can remember."

"Dost thee understand ship as well as osses and cows?"

"Haven't had much experience in ship, Master; at leastwise, I never done much ship-herding."

"Canst thee get up early in the morning,—four o'clock say, at latest? I allas have my osses turned up and fed at that time, and a fellow that lies soaking in bed a'ter that ain't worth a rush on my farm, I can tell ye."

"I can do it all, Master," said the man.

"Let me see," said the farmer again. "How many meals do you expect to tuck in in the course of the day? I only give my men breakfast, dinner, and supper; there's no coming the dew bit and bait at my farm, mind that."

"That will do, then, Master," replied the servant.

"Got a character, I s'pose?" inquired the farmer.

"Yes, Master," replied the man taking off his hat and fumbling under his pocket-handkerchief.

"And how long is it?"

"A good twelve months, Master."

"Yes ; let me see, what wages ?"

"Five shillings in the house, but ten if I live out."

"Yes," said the farmer ; "you fellows know how to stick it on, these emigration and war times, don't ye ? Well, I think thee'lt do ; come to-morrow. Stop ; let me see, canst thee read and write ?"

"Only a little, Master. I never went to school only a bit on Sunda's, now and then."

"Well, that will do ; come, as I said, to-morrow."

On turning round, the farmer muttered to himself, "Can't read and write much ; no matter, neither, as I knows on. Don't care about these kind philosopher chaps. By gor, they thinks they knows more than their masters, sometimes."

Not many yards beyond stood a lady, who might have passed well for the rib of the gentleman who had engaged the aforesaid man ; she was standing close up to, and minutely inspecting a fine healthy-looking girl of about twenty, a most admirable specimen of an Englishwoman, brought up in the pure air of dewy meads and hawthorn groves.

"And what sort of a situation have you been accustomed to ?" demanded the lady.

"I have managed a dairy of thirty cows," answered the maid.

"Get up well in the morning, I suppose ; never lying in bed fancying you are ill ? I had a girl once that was rather delicate in health, and she was the plague of my life nearly. What wages might you expect ? You know butter and cheese are low, we can't afford high wages ; farming is not what it was."

"I had ten pounds at my last place," returned the girl.

"Yes," said the lady ; "the masters and mistresses are ruined, and the servants spoiled by high wages. Well, I suppose as you make the cheese and butter, you must have it. Well, Nancy," said the lady again, in rather a coaxing mood ; "and how old are you ?"

This question, impertinent as it might appear, was asked by the lady as if she really expected the truth for an answer ; a question she well knew that was usually evaded by her sex, but which the girl answered to her satisfaction, by saying she was twenty, had twelve months' character, and she never ailed.

"That will do, Nancy, come on Monday," said the lady.

The engagement had just ended, when Mr. John came up to Bob for the first time since leaving him at the Black Horse.

“Youngster,” he commenced, “we must be thinking of getting home ; we are more than two hours behind time to-night, but it can’t be helped, when friends meet, they can’t allis part in a minute. I have bought fivescore ship, and should like you to help me get them through the town.”

Having collected the sheep, they travelled onward until arriving at an inn on the roadside, in which, as they neared, could be heard the tambourine and fiddle, with the heel and toe of the dancers beating time to the music, for here was Giles, with the girl of his choice, dancing in the high-lows with most vehement determination.

Now Mr. John had an idea that boys should be taught to curb their appetites, and Bob, thinking that he and his steed had pretty well practised this self-denial, hinted the same to his companion.

“Yes, very good,” said Mr. John, “and I’ll have a little myself, too, for we have a good many miles to ride through the night-air, and the ship are plaguy slow.”

Over the door of the inn stood printed the following well-advised words :—

“THE GATE.

“This gate hangs well, and hinders none ;
Refreshments take, and travel on.”

Mine host, Bob discovered, was fond of these little snatches of rhyme ; for on a black board

hanging against the wall inside, was also printed :

“ NO TRUST !

“ Chalk is good, but say what you will,
Chalk never will pay the maltster's bill.”

The latter effusion appeared self-evident ; but of the former, Bob remains in doubt until this day.

Having again collected the sheep, and having left the house of call, they recommenced their journey, which any one might at once see would be a tiresome one indeed, as the poor animals were already overfatigued, having been driven, probably, many miles to the fair that morning. As they slowly wended their way, Bob felt not a little uneasy for the safety of the flock, as they were frequently overtaken, and driven through by returns from the fair ; when presently he heard something advancing at a most rapid pace, apparently free from any control. Bob and his companion drove the flock to one side of the road, and awaited this night-fugitive to pass, when rush it came right into the flock of sheep, turning over several of the fleecy people, and breaking the leg of one of them. “ Now,” thought Bob, “ our travelling is at an end.” Mr. John fell into a dreadful fit of passion, to which he gave vent by heartily cursing the authors of the mischief, and swearing what he would do if he caught them, which he never succeeded in doing, they having kept on the same

speed until far out of sight and hearing. Bob dismounted, Mr. John had done so some moments before, as he required *terra firma* to stamp upon. However, with the assistance of the bank, they got the poor sufferer up in front of Mr. John's saddle, and in this way recommenced the journey again.

"Fools!" ejaculated Mr. John, as they advanced; "drunk, I'll be bound now, and deuced drunk, too, not to be able to see a flock of ship on a moonlight night. I'll be bound he'll die now, and a dead loss that will be; if the beggars had only done the mischief nearer the town, might have sold'n to the butcher, and he would not have made bad mutton neither; now, there's not a house under three miles. Well, I must take him home, and try to set the leg myself. I'll be bound though he'll never pay the doctor."

As before observed, it was a moonlight night, Phoebe was shining in her brightest refulgence, and with a grandeur and sublimity that belongs alone to a creature of celestial birth, unmoved by the trivial cares and vexations of this our lower world, and who in her benevolence and sympathy, sends down rays of sweetest light, to illumine the dark places of the same. So brilliant, indeed, were the rays, that the stars seemed to hide their diminished heads, and the noble trees,

as they intercepted the same, cast their shadows in such manner, that the sagacious animal upon which Bob rode considering the same to be real substances, hesitated placing his feet upon them. It was indeed a pleasant night, and one which Bob much enjoyed, as he and his companion slowly followed the flock, led by the bell-wether; there was something so truly different from the gasping race of life witnessed at the fair. Truly has it been said, "God made the country, but man made the town." Bob was thinking too, whether ignorance was really bliss, for if so there was plenty of that ingredient in the persons he had just seen; and wondered if in these rough caskets, there were not to be found some rich gems that only required to be brought to light, and polishing by the benevolent hand of education; from such sprang a Bloomfield, a Burns, and a host of others. For the want of education, doubtless—

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

And so they progressed; Bob's companion seldom or never speaking, that Bob thought he must have welcomed Somnus, even in the saddle, knowing that he possessed the happy faculty of falling into his arms when, and where he pleased, and the next moment waking up again to action. Presently, however, they were aroused from their

reverie by a party of dealers from the fair, riding whip and spur, whom Mr. John, in remembrance of the late catastrophe, took good care to challenge, as "Who comes there?" and "Mind what you are arter there, dimme; for I have got a flock of ship on the road," and so on; on which they pulled up, when one of them commenced:

"A fine night, gentlemen; rather late, though, I guess, for shepherding."

And now Bob recognized them to be the men, one of whom struck his pony when standing in the fair, and desired the same to be shown out.

"Not far to go, I s'pose, eh?" continued the man.

"Yes, too far, worst luck," said Mr. John.

"A nice little nag, that," he continued, in allusion to Bob's. "Not for sale, I s'pose?"

"Yes," said Mr. John, "'tis for sale, too."

"Looks well," he continued, "by moonshine; but broken-kneed, blear-eyed, or half blind, I'll be bound, by daylight. How much, now, taking him at a chance?"

"So much," answered Mr. John.

"It won't do; too much by half," returned the dealer; "now, for my own use, I just tell ye, I wouldn't give anything for'n; too much silk in the coat; too fine in the leg; too tender; too delicate-like, eh, Jack?" appealing to his com-

panion. "But I think I knows a gemmen whom he might suit, who wants a fancy sort of thing, and not working qualities much. Appearance is all he cares about; for pleasure he wants him, not work; the gemmen never does any of that hisself, eh, Jack? Now look here, master, I'll tell ye what I'll do, I'll chop with you; I'll give you this little black cob,"—in allusion to the one on which he was riding, that never knew yet what it was to feel tired; at the same time administering a blow across the poor animal's haunches with his ash stick, spurring his sides, and jerking the bit; at which tune the poor creature sprang into life. "Here's the little fellow," he continued; "here's the little oss to draw any load, carry any weight; wind, like a locomotive; eyes like a cat's; legs as sound as a donkey's; and can travel ten miles an hour, and keep it up, without wetting a hair. I say, this is the crettur," giving the animal another slap upon the neck, which made him jump again; "this is the hanimal I will change away for your delicate smooth-coated article. Now what d'e say?"

"What will ye give to boot?" asked Mr. John.

"So much," replied the dealer.

And so the bargain was struck, and soon Bob

found himself mounted again on an untried animal, his own having been exchanged, sold, gone ; and, with many conflicting ideas passing through his brain, resumed the journey. Bob felt he was losing confidence in his companion's horse-dealing experience. "Here," thought Bob, "is an animal probably unsound ; money, perhaps, not good."

"Well," commenced Mr. John, riding close up, "you have got a nice hanimal there, and no mistake ; and money to boot. The old gentleman will like that, won't he?"

"Yes," thought Bob, "perhaps he may ;" but, at the same time, having great misgivings as to his liking the horse,—for Bob had already discovered that the animal possessed a peculiar diagonal locomotion, drawing, as he thought, one leg on the ground,—in short, Bob felt they were taken in, and was beginning to feel out of spirits, accordingly, when his companion again rode up to him, and, leaning over his saddle, commenced :

"Youngster, we are a little late to-night, rather too late, on the road. I see by my watch that we are not far from the smaller hours ; but, as I said before, when friends meet it can't be helped, that's all about it. Now we have four miles more of road to get over, and the ship quite tired—done up, I might say. But what I

was going to remark more particular was, that if we got robbed to-night, it would not be the first by many who have met with that misfortune hereabouts. Do you see that clump of fir-trees surrounded by the wood yonder away to the left? Many's the man who has lost his all there."

The spot alluded to was the most lonely portion of the ride, and the wayfarer's anxiety usually was to pass this danger, to run this gauntlet, before midnight. The place, indeed, had a very suspicious appearance,—a blind road led away into a dense copse, stretching into an endless forest, backed up by high hills of mountain-like appearance; which was reputed to be the abode of robbers and highwaymen. And Mr. John was right when he remarked, "Many is the man who has lost his all there;" for many robberies had been committed on this spot, many of them accompanied with violence and murder.

"Now," continued Bob's companion, "I have got a few pounds in gold, and a note or two; that, with my watch, I'll give to you, and only three sovereigns keep myself; then, should the beggars come—and I only hope they won't—they'll think I spent all in buying the ship, and I'll tell um I did. They won't suspect you to have it, and we shall get off, maybe, by paying them only three pounds. I wish an earthquake would

swallow the beggars up, I do," he added ; " for, with this broken-legged ship, and the rest of um tired, there's no chance for a fellow but to stand and deliver his money or his life. Well, I loves my money ; but, after all, I loves my life better, eh, youngster ?"

So saying, they took up their positions again, and marched homeward.

Some persons with their pockets well replenished are happy, comfortable, delighted, feeling a sort of security in possession. This was not exactly Bob's experience, but rather the contrary,—feeling certain that if the beggars, (as Mr. John called them,) came, they would pounce upon him first, and punish him for being in possession of the money.

CHAPTER VII.

“O popular applause! What heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution.”

No sooner had the owner inspected his new rider, than he declared that he would never be seen mounting such a moonshine hack, and that Mr. John must have been blind or drunk to have been so taken in. Ah! had he known, poor gentleman, the wiles of horse-dealing, he would have never indulged in that bold remark. But certainly it was a peculiar animal, and did not improve by diurnal inspection, possessing, as before remarked, the novel diagonal locomotion; but which peculiar animal, Bob's elder brother, in consequence of horseflesh being at a premium, was compelled to ride in procession next day, in order to pay his respects to the divisional Mem-

ber, and who, in consequence of being so mounted, became the subject of no small annoyance from the farmers and tradesmen, who followed in line in white trousers, and hats of the same spotless purity. I say, as Bob's brother rode in the cavalcade to the town where the embryo M.P. was going to inform his constituents what he was prepared to uphold or reject, retain or ignore ; the principal portion of which remains to this day to be accomplished ; Bob's brother cut a rather conspicuous figure, and became the observed of all observers, for, being so mounted, he took more than what was considered his proper share of room in the closely-packed squadrons, led by the M.P. and local band ; for, ever and anon, in consequence of the diagonal locomotion peculiar to the animal, it occasionally brushed some of the farmers' highly-burnished boot-tops, when the rider at once became subject to such unpleasant effusions as, " Dang ye ! where are ye coming ? Can't ye be content with your own sheer of room ? I tell ye that animal ain't fit to ride procession in no ways ! " On which the rider, with an apology for the rudeness of his steed, would direct the same from complainant, but, in so doing, bring him broadside smack against the white trousers of the well-dressed tradesman, from whom he would receive the following gentle rebuke :—" I

think, Sir, you had better fall out of the ranks, unless you can be content with the superfluity of room already monopolized by you and your nag. I tell you, Sir, it is really disgraceful ! See how you have soiled my white trousers ! A pretty figure I shall cut at the hustings ! It is, I repeat, disgraceful you can't manage the animal better !” Bob's brother, seeing that unless he fell out of the ranks, the ranks would soon fall out with him, determined on making his exit as soon as possible with credit to himself and horse, and presently an opportunity having occurred, in consequence of a stone getting into the hoof of the M.P.'s caparisoned steed, which caused a sudden stoppage, and no little confusion, he sidled out and fell to the rear, and in that position went on to the town ; and, as this is termed ‘Rustic Reminiscences,’ it will not be amiss or out of place, perhaps, if I inform the reader how, and what the M.P. spoke, and the opposition he had to contend with.

The Member, having ascended the hustings, at once commenced : “ This is the proudest day of my life ; the greatest height of my ambition ; this is to me the paragon of days ; an era from which I shall be delighted to date ; day on which I stood before you, to be elected your representative in Parliament,—to be chosen by the free,

independent, unbiassed votes of the yeomen and farmers of this noble county ; (the farmers winced) to represent you in the most intelligent and enlightened senate the world ever saw. Gentlemen, I repeat, I am proud of my election, because it is by your free, uncoerced proxies (the farmers winced again). Gentlemen," continued the M.P., "it will be my privilege, duty, and delight to represent you faithfully, fully, and conscientiously. I will support Church and State, and tolerate all sections of Protestantism. I will support all necessary army and navy estimates, believing that old England should rest secure in her own strength, without affection or favour from liberally or otherwise disposed nations, and compelling respect from despotic ones, by her formidable array. (Cheers from the farmers.) (A voice : This is all bosh ! How about Protection ?) Gentlemen, I shall consider it my duty, as far as I can, to protect the cultivators of the soil, and to support all their legitimate traditional rights. (A voice : He's a trump.) I will also encourage, in every safe manner, the unlimited development of trade and commerce. (A voice : He won't do that by Protection ! How about the game laws ?) Gentlemen, I give you, I pledge you, my word to support every measure likely to add to your advantage. (A voice :

That's a twist !) (Farmer Dawes, touch him up a little on the taxes !) Gentlemen, with respect to the taxes, it will be my great delight to lift the burden of taxation from the shoulders of the farmers and yeomen of England. (Bravo ! You're a brick ! Go on again !) Yes, gentlemen, I say, and you'll all respond, God speed the plough !" (Bravo ! hurrah ! hurrah ! He's the boy for us ! He shall go to the great house and jaw away, and no mistake !)

The speaker having concluded, and as the farmers returned from the hustings,—

"I say, Jones," commenced Farmer Dawes, "d'e think he will carry all out he's been saying?"

"I don't know, I hope he may ; he'll be as well as most of um, I reckon. I dare say he'll take care of number one, or he's a fool. However, he has made the money fly, and that's something these times. We'll away, and drink his health in a stiff un or two."

But there was an unexpected opposition in one Mr. Jacobs, from the Minorities, who likewise came forward. Mr. Jacobs was an energetic man of many summers, iron-grey in shade, of full habit, red face, and aquiline nose ; possessing a superabundance of confidence, and delighting in a big swelling phraseology.

“ Yes,” he commenced, “ now I have a policy ; I don’t come before you like a naked political skeleton, presenting an empty dish. No, but here I am, able and willing to support the franchise to any extent,—ay, universal suffrage if you like ; so that every man, high or low, rich or poor, learned or illiterate ; may have a voice in the government of his country. I will oppose Church and State ; the game laws ; church rates ; and Protection ; because the whole posse of them is an unfair imposition. Yes, I say, if you will only return me, I will oppose church rates *in toto*, because such rates are, I affirm, an unfair tax, compelling all alike to support that in which they feel no interest. I will oppose the game laws, because every man in my opinion should have his hare or rabbit as well as the Squire, and without fear of Mr. Big-pocket Velvet-jacket. What do we in London care about hares or rabbits ? Nothing, I say truly nothing, until we see them hanging up by their heels in the New Cut or Seven Dials. Therefore, I say I am your man, there. I will uphold every liberal policy ; but strenuously oppose every one that stinks of Conservativism. (‘ Bravo, Jacobs !’ arose from the audience.) There now, I say ; here’s the man, ready and willing to represent you, without any pretence ; honestly and faithfully. I will

of course, as my opponent, support all regular army and navy estimates, that confidence may be established, and speculation and commersh flourish. Likewise the glorious Volunteer force. Blesh you, I am a Volunteer myself, and glory in the name. Now shen, shentlemen," continued Mr. Jacobs, "if you will return me, I'll tell you what I'll do for your personal and local interest. First, then, there's my son Ishmael, who is fond of his gun, and other wild sports, shall do himself the honour of coming down and shooting with you at the usual season. ('Bravo, Jacobs, we'll give him some pork,' arose again.) Now, no impudensh, shentlemen," returned Mr. Jacobs; "and I and Mrs. Jacobs will come down in the winter and look after your schools, buy up the coarse pieces of beef, make soup, and distribute to all comers without affection or favour, creed or sect. Yes, I intend looking well after those who honour me with a seat in the House of Representatives." "Old clo!" shouted some ignorant urchin; on which the would-be M.P. became exasperated, declaring that if they continued their ignorance, he would not represent them at all. "But," continued the speaker, "shentlemen, for all joking, I say I am here, ready and willing to be offered at the glorious shrine of Liberal politics. I am not one of your

young, untried, unripe boys ; but I am a peach fully ripe. I can blossom again, and bring forth political fruit, if you will only transplant me to the conservatory House of Parliament in Westminster assembled. Yes, and you shall learn to blesh the day when you chose Jacob Jacobs to take care of your political interests, although it was a mere acccident that brought him down to offer himself as your Member. ('Bravo, Jacobs, bring your daughter Dinah with you when you come next.') No impudensh, shentlemen, I say, or you will fail in getting a shentleman to represent you, and you will deserve the shlight."

"Hurrah ! bravo, Jacobs ! go home ! lie down ! mind your shop !" and many vulgar expressions were hurled at the would-be M.P., who slowly and with great confidence descended the platform, and left in the company of his friends. It need scarcely be remarked that Mr. Jacobs failed in persuading the electors of Hogham that he was a fit person to represent them in Parliament, in Westminster assembled.

The speeches having ended, the band struck up 'See, the Conquering Hero Comes ;' and the procession, headed again by the M.P., returned as they went. Bob's brother, carefully keeping in the rear, presently turned short to the right, and

was out of sight almost immediately ; and soon reaching home, dismounted, declaring he never would on such an occasion ride such an ill-mannered brute again ; nor did he, for the next day the animal was changed away for another, broken-winded, it is true, but which the owner declared he preferred to one going three ways at once.

Now about this time Bob's attention was called, with other boys, to the choir at the meeting-house, a choir rather celebrated in the parish for the number, and, as was supposed, excellence of the performers, both vocal and instrumental. The choir, in fact, consisted of double and single basses, violoncellos, flutes, and clarionets ; in addition to which a row of sound, sonorous lungs of both sexes formed a line in front of the gallery. The leader of the choir was a stout, burly, full-fed, bull-eyed looking man, very jealous of the credit of the sweet singers,—and who held command likewise over the double-bass. He also insisted on keeping supervision over the whole gallery ; and woe to the luckless wight who crept behind the double-bass, or back of a pew, with the wicked intention of eating apples, cracking nuts, putting his fingers to his ears for the purpose of studying the principles of acoustics, or half-closed his eyes in the act of multi-

plying the candles ; for so sure as he did so, down would come the bow of the double-bass upon his devoted pate, making him forget the number of the latter in an instant ; and on looking round would see descending upon him as angry and vindictive a countenance as was ever created, and which he would not forget for the next twelve months. Another part of this gentleman's business consisted also in keeping awake the junior portion of the singers. This he likewise performed by the application of the aforesaid bow. Or, when either of them, as it sometimes happened, swerved from the right direction of the scale, the administering bow would touch such a wanderer just under the fifth rib, causing the same to perform a most polite salaam to the congregation below, producing a scarlet flush on the cheek, and many other disagreeable feelings that youth is heir to.

Now it so happened that one Sunday one of the best singing-boys, by the name of Primm, had suffered in this way, and determined on leaving the singing-gallery forthwith, which resolution much displeased the leader. But although Primm gave up public singing, he did not entirely give up music, for he had purchased a musical snuff-box, which he regularly played, in order to interest himself and gratify his pas-

sion for sweet sounds. This little instrument he constantly carried in his pocket, in order to wind up and set going, when his spirits fell. Primm likewise came to the singing-gallery, taking up his position in rear of the orchestra; but it so happened that one Sunday, before entering the sacred edifice, he had as usual been engaged amusing himself and fellows by running over, on his musical-box 'Jenny Jones,' 'Auld Lang Syne,' etc.; and winding up the instrument, returned the same, ready loaded with music, to his pocket; but from some unaccountable cause, at the moment when all was more than usually still, this profane, thoughtless box, supposed to be quietly sleeping in the pocket of its owner, actually set up playing 'Jenny Jones.' Primm looked pale, white, red, white again, being most desperately frightened. Presently, however, the sound caught the ear of the leader of the orchestra, who slowly and cautiously rose from his seat, bow in hand, just like the deadly cobra about to pounce upon its prey; and soon discovering from whence the sound issued, appeared terribly angry, shook his head, bit his lips, shook his bow; but all to no purpose. Presently, in a half-dreamy manner, Primm looked round at the leader, as if the noise proceeded from him rather than from himself; bringing the gaze of the con-

gregation upon the same. This had the effect of making the knight of the bow more enraged than ever ; more especially as in the meantime on went the conceited little instrument, changing from 'Jenny Jones' to 'Rule Britannia,' and so on through most of its tunes ; when up rose the leader again, stretched forth his bow, and brought it down on the pate of Primm, who, on jumping round, saw the same angry visage looking and shaking its head at him, when Primm, having likewise become exasperated, shook his head in return ; but still, during this little unpleasant episode, on went the loquacious instrument, revelling in the mischief caused, being determined on playing out its whole set of tunes. The people in the body of the chapel looked up, as proof they could hear the profanity that too often went on in the singing-gallery. The clerk, too, in the table-seat stood up, and stretched forward, in an imploring manner, in the direction of the singers. So at last Primm, like a good nursing mother, thought he had better carry the troublesome noisy child out, which went on playing 'God Save the Queen' all down the stairs ; the leader observing, as he passed, that he never saw such an impudent little villain before ; although this, dear reader, was as complete an accident as ever happened to an unfortunate urchin.

Now singers, as a class, are usually very sensitive beings, and a short rebuke will often go a long way with them; and it does not require much to be said to send them to their old device of giving up and leaving the congregation to its own resources; and this having been an unusually musical day, seven pieces having been sung and played (one entirely instrumental), the good old minister, after finishing his sermon, considered that a little timely rebuke would be as well, in order to check any undue performances in future. So commenced:

“Music, instrumental and vocal, can be used in the beautiful expression of our sympathies. Music hath charms; music can charm the savage soul; music, indeed, is an assemblage of the sweetest sounds that can be produced by man (evident satisfaction in the countenances of the performers); but, my dear friends,” added the minister, “there is a possibility of having too much even of a good thing (frowns from the performers). My dear friends, I need say no more; I am sure you will kindly take, what is kindly meant.”

But this address, short as it was, had a sad effect upon the orchestra; some of whom went home, and came out no more openly in the gallery; for, as before remarked, musicians are very sensitive beings.

Haymaking had now commenced on an extensive scale ; and Mr. John, as usual, had been round inviting volunteers to enter his fields, and have a bit of fun at harrest ; which always turned out very hard work ; for he had a most cunning practice of placing his volunteer friends between the paid labour, as he would have placed an uncertain colt between a pair of tried teamsters, and in this way secured the right number of turns from his young friends. In order, likewise, to obtain a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, from his people, he was in the habit of bringing a man from one of his barges on the river to undertake the management of the same. This man, he considered, possessed qualities equal to the task of leading the *corps de harrest*. He was a short-necked, stout-built, bull-dog-looking fellow, of the pugilistic breed, possessing much physical pride, which appeared not to be under the control of any proportional mental capacity ; a little below the middle height, and most dogged, unamiable, and morose in disposition ; but, as Mr. John expressed it, "just the size chap to whip um up to it ; but having usually lived on ship-board, he did not really understand much of the process of farming." He might have been considere'd more in the light of an amphibious animal, whose proper occupation was to

find sustenance in aquatic, rather than agrarian life ; and this want of knowledge, frequently got him into rather hot water with his employer, who designated him his “ ganger ;” and occasionally, when his master entered the field, he would stalk away with him, receiving all the confidential instructions considered by the master necessary to be known by him. Sometimes, too, Mr. John made a sort of pet of this fellow, and his name being Joseph, would address him in the endearing term of “ Joie.” It always appeared to Bob, however, that Mr. John made a pet of Joie, just as some persons of very bad taste would of a crocodile, boa, or any other unloveable animal. It could not, certainly, have been his exterior physical appearance that the master admired ; it must rather have been some interior mental qualification probed by Mr. John, but which was not comprehended by a slighter capacity. So when occasionally walking together, with hands behind, and heads down, for the servant had imitated the attitude of the master to a *t*, Mr. John would commence ;—

“ Now Joie, I say, keep them at it ; don’t let them rest too often like, but keep them moving. I allis think it a good plan to put the women folks and children in the middle of the rakers ; say between yourself, as ganger, and two of the

best, behind ; then, don't ye see, Joie, dimme, Joie ! they must go on."

This word "dimme," Mr. John sometimes used as a prefix or as an affix ; therefore, sometimes it would be "Dimme, Joie !" or, "Joie, dimme !" but it was a word to which he was very partial. To all these instructions Joie would answer "Ay, ay, Sir !" but never remembered one-half his master's instructions, nor executed one-third of the same. Sometimes, in consequence, the master got angry with his unmanageable pet ; when a regular quarrel would spring up between them, and high words flow freely ; when Mr. John would get into a towering passion, and stutter to such a degree, that he had to cool down, and commence again ; but still he managed to get out some disagreeable snatches, not always approved of, or appreciated by, Joie.

"Dimme, Joie !" he commenced one day, as they were walking, *tête-à-tête* as usual ; "you land lubber, you river shrimp, I should like to know what you know about harrest ? Dimme, when you became my ganger I told ye ye were to stick close to my orders in every respect ; and now, dimme, Joie ! Joie, dimme ! you have just told the people to turn the swards against the wind, dimme. Why, you sea dog, don't you see the effect of this ? how much labour and time

are lost, and that's money to me ! Why, there's no end to the loss, and just because you will use your own ass's way here, instead of turning the hay with the wind. You, Joie, dimme, have got them all turning it right again it."

"Well," replied Joie, "I thought I had better have it turned that way, mester."

"Thought !" said the master ; "Dimme, Joie, you have no right to think, I tell ye ; you must let others think for you here ; I think ; and you—you sea-serpent—you slippery eel, have the impudence to go and onthink all again. What can a sea-lobster like you know about haymaking ? yet you sea-dog you, you take upon you to teach me, who have allis been a haymaker. I tell ye what it is, Joie, dimme ! if you go on like this I'll keep you to the ' Sarah Anne,' and you shall never step on shore to have a bit of fun at harrest, I tell ye."

Then cooling down a little, the master would begin again, "Now, Joie, don't you see the effect of this ? By taking your own pig-headed way you have just lost one half-hour at least. Don't ye see, dimme, Joie ! Joie, dimme ! don't you see, you rogue, time is money to me ? There now, there's sixpence for you ; mind and not get drunk, and allis obey my orders, dimme."

"Rather warm," said the foreman, as he turned away ; "little pots are soon hot, and empty casks

make a great sound. 'Twas a precious rough squall ; I wonder didn't make me tack about a bit ; never mind, afterwards came a silver shower. Master's right, time 'is money, sure enough. Why, here I ain't been more than a quarter of an hour learning all these destructions. And here's a delightful silver sixpence,—two pots of threepenny, or one of sixpenny, to-night. Joie, dimme ! dimme, Joie ! you are a lucky dog, after all. I only wish I was a lawyer, and got my money by jaw. Methinks they make it easier than I do." And so commenced turning the swaths in the right direction.

We must now leave Mr. John attending to the productions of Wisdom's Acres, and the other little businesses of his life, in which he was doubly anxious, now that he had been blessed with a little son, whom every one agreed was growing exactly like the father, "a real chip of the old block ;" adding, "that so long as the young one survived, the elder would never be dead."

Little Uncertainty, too, I must observe, had been duly baptized and vaccinated ; so that the mother now considered him safe for both worlds, as the usual forms had been gone through ; Mr. John, too, honoured the church, on the occasion of the naming, with his presence ; but Mrs. John,

not permitting him to enter the sacred edifice in white gabardine, turned up from its hiding-place his wedding-coat and waistcoat; which, although in cut and pattern were a little out of date, were passable in the society of trees and shrubs; and, as Mr. John looked in the glass, for the first time for many years, he observed, "Dimme, missis! methinks I look fust-rate."

The widow and her daughters lived according to their ma's idea of gentility, in the cottage before named, not caring for nor thinking much about Little Uncertainty, with his unanticipated advent, which had rendered null and void a clause which stood previously in their favour in their pa's will; for, as Mrs. G. expressed herself, "She did not care a rap; as she very well knew her fresh-looking daughters would marry exceedingly well before long; they could not help doing so, with their personal charms, and a thousand pounds, plump down, on their wedding-day; the only difficulty would be for her and them to know out of such a posse of ambitious lords which to settle upon. The thing had already commenced; a few more genteel parties, and a little more of the light fantastic, and everything would go on most favourably; and, as for Mr. John and his brat, I don't care a rap! I don't care a rap!" she repeated.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Birds, through the wastes of the trackless air,
Ye have a guide, and shall we despair?
Ye over desert and deep have passed,
And so shall we reach our bright home at last.”

Hemans.

It was summer. The sun, great ruler of the seasons, projected his rays in the meridian tide in almost perpendicular direction, in consequence of which, the shadows grew more diminutive in size, and indistinct in outline. The flowers—the pretty flowers, jewels of nature—flourished in their highest refulgence, and rejoiced in the warm beams that brought forth in their most enchanting hues, and sweetest fragrance.

The tiny insects, doubly diligent and active, buzzed from leaf to leaf and flower to flower, or crossed and recrossed the path,—to them a mighty road,—in search of winter’s store, or sweetest nectar; catching with delight the sunny hour, the day of action with them, a frail people.

The birds hushed their varied melodies, and betook themselves to the shady grove, or denser forest, till evening's cooler breeze.

The cattle, oppressed with languor, and tormented by the relentless gadfly, thrust their heads and fiery eyes into the hedge of thorns, or brushed their delicate sides with wild excitement, along the pendent branches; the younger and more foolish leaving the shelter of hedge and ditch, galloped off at full speed, over field and meadow, brook and ditch, being determined to outstrip their winged oppressors; but finding all in vain, occasionally stopped, and gave vent to their disappointment in a low subdued bellow. While the sheep, patient, and inactive, with hanging heads, and heaving sides, calmly and resignedly awaited the setting sun.

The horses, too, as they passed to and fro laden with summer's produce, heated and excited, craved the cooling spring. The geese and ducks, with yellow broods, reposed lazily upon the bosom of the ponds; whilst the hens and chickens basked in and lashed the dust into clouds. All nature, indeed, spoke in emphatic accents of summer's reign.

In the front of yonder cottage, too, with thatched roof and pigsty at the gable, and Esquimaux-looking huts in front, stood Dame

Dowel, the mistress of the establishment. There stood the old dame with door-key in one hand and frying-pan in the other, with which she produced a deafening sonorous sound, in order, as she supposed, to allure her bees from taking too extended a flight when on the eve of swarming. There had been no little commotion for days in the hive, which she anxiously watched, in order to administer the usual antidote. All animals love music, whether they love noise is another matter ; at any rate, there she stood, banging away with determined energy, repeating, as she did so,—

“Come back bees, come back bees,
Fly not away to yonder trees.”

This was the antidote her mother applied on similar occasions, and her mother before her, and she would have never forgiven herself had she lost a swarm having neglected the supposed charm. How pleased she was to see them alight on her plum-tree ! to see the new queen enveloped by the willing and obedient multitude, looking in appearance much like a cluster of brown grapes, but, in reality, a lump of the most active and energetic matter possibly to be imagined. And in the direction of yon stream, too, could be heard the bleating of sheep and barking of dogs ; but it was not the murderous butcher with his cart that aroused the timid flock ; but their

friends cleansing their fleece, preparatory to relieving them of the burden. And stretched at his greatest longitude, lay old Boxer. No, he was not dead, nor sleeping; for the sly fellow's eye was still slightly open, and in a moment would have sprung into action at the sound of the master's whistle.

On such a day it was that Farmer Brunt, a friend of Bob's father, rode up to the gate (on his old Jet, as he called his rider, she being black), and to whom I must now, in few words as possible, introduce the reader.

Farmer Brunt was a man of between fifty and sixty years of age, tall, and of spare habit, and, to the close observer, would have impressed the mind and conveyed the idea of a man of restless, energetic habits, and one who had never permitted sedentary ease to cover his bones with any superabundance of matter. There he waited on old Jet, waiting to see Bob's sire. Old Jet, it must be told too, was a nag of some twenty summers, and whose pace at present was an easy jog, jog, to which pace she and her master had agreed many years; she had been accustomed to all kinds of work from a colt, therefore the plough, the waggon, the cart, the saddle, came alike to her; she had no will in the matter, but, like a good soldier, was ready for every duty, without a question on the subject.

Farmer Brunt's greatest pace, however, was five miles an hour, and beyond this fixed rate he never cared to travel, and if any of his neighbours rode faster than this, "There they go," he would say, "there they go, riding away from the money." There he sat on his thick-legged Jet, who ever and anon lashed him with her superfluity of tail, wielded not exactly in mathematical precision, in order to discharge the voracious flies penetrating her devoted sides ; there he sat, dressed as usual in white gabardine, corduroys, gaiters ending in toes, and broad felt hat. But be it known, that on Sundays he exchanged the gabardine for blue coat with brass buttons, which coat had held together since his wedding-day, as some determined, but a point upon which the writer is not exactly certain ; but we know that with care such an article will last a long time, and this had a deal of care, indeed it might have been judiciously termed a sacred coat, as it seldom went anywhere but to church.

"Good morrow, neighbour," commenced the farmer, addressing Bob's father ; "methinks we shall have a good harrest to-year."

"Yes," replied Bob's sire ; "a fine day, but rather too hot."

"Hot, do call it, eh ? Well, maybe like it's a little warm, but you sort of folks don't seem to

stand weather anyhow; this is fine weather to-year, see how yellor the corn is getting already; why we shall be able to take the field in a week or two, if it goes on like this, I can tell ye. I thought I would just ride over, and see if the youngster had got his holidays, and if so, thought perhaps he would like to come over to old farm a week or two, and have a little shooting, and the likes on't, it will do his health good; we have a terrible lot of sparrows to-year, the laziest of all birds, they are, I'll be bound, for they'll never budge a peg so long as a bit of corn remains, they are playing the deuce we't; I should think they thrash out bushels of a morning; so thought the boy would like the sport of shooting at um a bit; won't kill many, may be, but 'll frighten them off, and that will do as well."

For Bob's part he liked the idea exceedingly, for here was a far wider domain to wander over than Wisdom's Acres. Here were not only acres but hides, over which, Robinson Crusoe-like, with gun on shoulder, and sheep dog by his side (to answer the purpose of a retriever), he could ramble.

Bob knew Farmer Brunt well, and felt fully satisfied that beneath that rough exterior, that artificial shell, was hidden a kind and affectionate disposition; his, in fact, might have been considered a disposition in disguise, having, from a

boy, been surrounded by, and ruling over perhaps the lowest and most uneducated class of Englishmen, to whom courtesy and leniency would, in all probability, have been taken for and construed into weakness and irresolution ; he found it, therefore, necessary to assume, however painful to himself, the armour of apparent severity, in order to prevent any neglect of duty that might otherwise have occurred. To the superficial observer, therefore, the man appeared morose and unamiable, but still even to him it not unfrequently appeared that some of the more soft and kind feelings were struggling to be set free. Thus one would come and say, "Jack is taken ill, Master, and obliged to leave the field."

"Yes, just like him," the master would answer ; "allis ill when there's plenty of work to do, I'll be bound ; well, he can't go, that's certain."

"But he has gone," returned the servant.

"He has left, didst say ? Well, then, I suppose he must be ill ; go and see if thee canst do anything for 'n ; but don't say I sent thee, mind."

Then would come his regular petitioner, Betty (too high-minded to place herself under the care of the parish), to whom he would return, in allusion to her curtseying propensities, "What be arter there, bobbing up and down in that silly fashion for ?"

"And please, master, Betty very hungry, and has not tasted a pinch of snuff for a week."

"Yes, and bother to you, and so you have been these many years past," returned the farmer; "and I tell ye what it is now, I won't be hunted about in this manner by a set of useless paupers,—and as to snuff, indeed! why I don't take it myself, it's a dirty, wasteful, bad habit; hungry, you say, yet the little you get goes to supply that nasty, dusthole practice!"

"Poor missus used to give me some," returned Betty again.

On which, away would go the farmer into the house and close the door after him, being to all appearances very displeased, at the same time calling to his old servant, Molly, to go and give her a loaf of bread and sixpence for her snuff, and tell her not to pay Old Farm another visit for a long time to come.

"I told her that, last time," said Molly.

"I don't care—I don't care," replied her master; "do as I tell ye, and don't stand preaching at me in that way, but go."

"Poor soul!" he would commence as soon as Molly was gone, "it's bad to be hungry, to be a poor houseless wanderer, and the only comfort she seems to have now is a pinch of snuff; and who would be such a base thief as to rob her of that?"

Not Brunt. She was well off once,—the pride of the village; her husband, too, was a good partner, a kind father, and affectionate friend ; but all gone—gone, my poor wife too. Yes ; peace to her dear soul ; she misses her now, and I miss her too ; in that respect we are both alike. ‘ Missus gave her some,’ she said. Yes ; she’s right ; it was given with all the kind feelings of a tender woman’s heart. Yes ; we miss her, Betty. ‘ I can’t send you away,’ I said so last time, Molly says, and so I shall again, I guess, if you call here. I can’t refuse you, poor soul ; it is bad to be friendless, houseless, destitute. Yes, Betty, like you I am lonely ; but I have, through mercy, a few comforts, and you shall never want a pinch of snuff, if I know it.”

Then comes Molly again in a great hurry,

“ Here, master, here’s a man has brought this ; I think it is a begging-paper. He says his oss is dead, and he wants to buy another.”

“ Take it away, take it away, woman ; what have I to do with people’s dead osses. I have enough of my own, and too many sometimes ; and do I go snivelling about the parish with a paper signed by the parson and squire ? Not I indeed, shouldn’t think of doing such a thing.”

“ Yes, master, but you have plenty more osses ; but that was the only one he had.”

"Well, I can't help it; take it away and tell him I have nothing for him."

Presently the farmer would call out again—

"Here, Molly; did you send that fellow away?"

"Yes, master; and he's halfway across the orchard."

When, on going to the door, he would shout out, "Eh, you Sir! where the deuce are you going off to in such a hurry? Here, I am sorry you have had the loss, and here's ten shillings for you to help get another, but don't come again, or you'll get nothing, I can tell you." And the farmer would return to his room, feeling doubly happy that he had shown mercy to the poor man, for, as the poet has it—

"It is twice bless'd,

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

Farmer Brunt was not a man of words, but of deeds, one of whom, as described by another—

"Did good by stealth,

And blushed to find it fame."

The farmer had been a widower many years before Bob had the privilege of knowing him. His wife dying left him with two sons,—one of whom, tiring of the slow but sure process of ploughing the yielding soil, left his father's house in order to plough the ever eccentric main, and the

ship having set sail for British North America, was never more heard of, the supposition being that she foundered in the boundless Atlantic; the other, longing to follow to the field some war-like lord, died in India, after a victory over the Sikhs, having been mortally wounded during the action. So that Farmer Brunt had, more than once, been compelled to quaff the bitter cup of bereavement, of which all men are compelled to drink, more or less, during their mortal existence. His housekeeper, at this time, was his maiden sister, Miss Rachel, a most active and indefatigable lady of domesticity as ever followed up and ruled over the staff domestic,—of whom she remarked not one of the breed could be trusted; a regular set of eye-servants, and deceivers, from whom nothing of any good could be expected,—no religion, no morality, no truthfulness, nothing whatever. So having laid this down as an axiom, she lived that most uncomfortable life of spending and being spent, in the disagreeable office of check-mating her *employées*; and when her lady visitors called upon her to have a little friendly chat, again and again would she, to the horror of the same, introduce the subject of servants. “A most odious set,” she would say; “my horror by day, and they give me the nightmare when I retire for rest;” and, in this most unedifying manner

talk the afternoon away, until the subject became quite an infliction ; making her friends resolve, as they left, never to visit her again. Then, securing the farmer's ear for a little moment, would at once commence, "Yes, brother ; an awful set they are, indeed."

"Yes, Rachie," would return her brother ; "and always have been, I reckon ; but we must do all we can with them, and for them."

"Ah, that's what you always say, brother," returned the sister sharply. "I am sure, even to-day,—now it is enough to vex the patience of a thousand Jobs,—just listen brother, to-day Molly took the pudding up, and let it fall immediately, breaking the basin into a hundred pieces ; yesterday, Betty allowed the tea things to slip, and then a cup was smashed, and the other day I peeped into Betty's box, and there, oh horrors ! I found my kid gloves, entirely spoiled, and other things that I have had by me from a girl. I say it makes my very flesh creep, it does. You don't know, brother, what it is to manage servants,—that is, women-servants."

And so she would continue to proceed, until the farmer would become quite exhausted of patience ; at the least appearance of which, she would tell him that he did not know what it was to manage servants,—that is, women-servants. Miss

Rachel, too, was exceedingly religious, in her way; she liked to attend church, when a convenient season offered,—that was, when there was no home or servants requiring her immediate attention. In her character there was, and ever had been, a superfluity of Martha, with a minor portion of Mary. But still, Miss Rachel was pious, too,—at least Bob, as a boy, thought so, as she repeated all the responses with exact precision, and in a most emphatic and audible manner, and never neglected finding her feet, when the National Anthem was played or sung in her presence; on which occasion, too, if she saw any ill-behaved, irreverent young man, who dared to keep his hat on during the exercise, at him she would shake her head, at the same time smile in a most complacent manner, as if she really pitied his ignorance, and until young Ignoramus felt bound to uncover; from this, too, we might argue that Miss Rachel was not only pious, but loyal likewise. But, as before remarked, it was not an easy matter for Miss Rachel to get to church, as, before leaving home, she had to see that every cupboard and drawer was locked, and the keys carefully stowed away in her comprehensive and very extensive pocket, slung round her waist; so in fact hers was not rest, for she did not only carry her cares to the church door, but

even into the church, having the reminder of the same in the iron wards in her pocket. She never took the precaution to banish care in the sense the poet has it, where he says :—

“Far from my thoughts, vain world, begone,
Let my religious hours alone.” . . .

No; for she had a world of care, and ever and anon, as she sat in the pew, she would spasmodically slap the outside of her pocket to assure herself of the presence of the iron guards; and, no sooner had the clergyman pronounced the last Amen! than she was off, and on the road before any of her neighbours had left their seats, lest she should be interrupted in her egress from the building. Her brother often expostulated with her on her careful anxiety, telling her that if she went on so, she would get quite thin, which by the bye, she had already got; indeed, the farmer quite pitied his sister's disturbed and restless disposition, but all to no purpose; for Miss Rachel would always be looking after somebody or something, and then, and only then, was she in her proper element. At church, her particular business was to look after Bob,—to see that he never fell off to sleep, and, singular enough, if only one eye winked, she was as sure to observe it as if he had snored outright; and so sure and certain as an eye commenced failing, down would come her

little slippered foot on Bob's, shaking her head and repeating, "Don't sleep—don't sleep, you naughty boy. You naughty boy to go to sleep in church!" But one Sunday, and that a very hot one in July, to Bob's utter astonishment, Miss Rachel herself gave way to the great subduer; yes, Miss Rachel actually fell asleep; and Bob thinking it would be a kind action on his part for many similar favours on hers, leaned forward over the wide high seats in order to touch her toe, but in so doing, lost his balance, slipped off the seat, and came down much harder on her foot than he intended; Bob will never forget how frightened she was and he was. She jumped up from the seat, he did the same, but in so doing all the books fell out of her lap, causing the greatest commotion in the church; the congregation all looking in the direction of their pew; one gentleman from London, and a visitor at the Squire's, actually, to the great annoyance of Miss Rachel, pointed his quizzing-glass in their direction; but Miss Rachel passed it off exceedingly well from herself to Bob, as she continued shaking her head and calling him a naughty boy! so that all the congregation thought he had actually fallen asleep and dropped from his seat, like Eutychus of old, in that unconscious state. Peace, however, having been restored, and proper

reason regained, she bent over to Bob, and calmly remarked, "I was not asleep—I was not asleep!"

"That will do very well," thought Bob; "but if you were not actually asleep, you very soon would have been."

But Bob usually went to church with the farmer, who was ambitious to be considered one of the singers, and consequently took his position in the singing-gallery. Bob liked this much; better, too, because from this pinnacle he had a bird's-eye view of all below. Here sat also the wheelwright and blacksmith, who led the singing; at least, Bob thought so, by the great exertions they made, the extension of muscle, and holiness of their faces. Music's mishap, indeed! "O tempora! O mores!" Was there ever a science so murdered, so ill-used, so caricatured, as the beautiful science of music? Every child is considered a fit subject for its tormenter; every rustic considers himself competent to judge of its excellence, and even to maltreat the composition of some of its most eminent composers, the real geniuses of the science.

The church was small and old-fashioned; the pews and pulpit of dark oak, were high in the extreme, and served to protect the drowsy sleeper from the vulgar gaze, many of whom

constantly converted their own partition into a dormitory.

Sitting in the gallery, of course Bob enjoyed, as remarked before, a bird's-eye view of the scene below. There was the Squire, a little attenuated elderly gentleman, of some threescore years and ten ; there he was, occupying his own pew, known as the ' Squire's pew' for many antecedent centuries ; a pew as comfortable as hassocks and cushions could possibly make it ; and, in addition to which, it possessed, to Bob, a most singular novelty, in the shape of a fireplace, in which the day being wet and cold, the butler had ordered a fire to be lit for his master. Now, having never seen the like comfort in a like place before, Bob was particularly attentive to the proceedings in the pew of caloric, where, ever and anon, he observed the Squire walk up to the dispenser of heat, and give it a determined poke, rub his hands, and crack his fingers, then return again to the edge of the pew, repeating the responses all the way there and back, with the greatest vehemence ; after which, in a very independent manner, take a survey of the whole congregation, not forgetting to turn an eye in the direction of the gallery and its occupants, being, as Bob supposed, very much interested in the laborious exertions of the blacksmith and wheelwright. Service over, and on

their way home, the Squire took the opportunity of speaking to the farmer, in a very condescending manner, as "I was glad to see you at church, farmer; I was glad to see you, I say, and that lad with you, too," in allusion to Bob; "he sings a little, I suppose."

"Yes, Sir, comes it a little; he'll do, I reckon by-and-by, when he has learned a little more."

"I hope farmer that you will always consider it a duty to see that all the young people who may be staying at your house, go to church, and be careful to go yourself, farmer, go yourself, farmer, go yourself, you will be the gainer, no one else, no one else."

These little civilities and observations Bob observed pleased the farmer very much; for, although Farmer Brunt was not a tenant of the Squire's, yet he liked much to be considered by him, as the Squire was a gentleman highly respected in the neighbourhood, and lucky indeed did that man think himself, who got one of his farms to cultivate.

Game, in the shape of small birds, proved plentiful, and often did the farmer arouse Bob from seducing bed and sleep, at the small hour of four, by knocking at his room-door, with "Baily, baily" (bailiff)! "I can't sleep a wink; methinks I can hear um at the wheat; they will thrash out

bushels now, they will, if you are not after um shortly."

How different in this respect are youth and age ! Youth loves the early morning repose ; when, on the contrary, age is wakeful and restless, begrudging the flying moments ; while the young are prodigal with regard to time, age is parsimonious and churlish of the same.

Bob was soon up however, and crossing the fields in pursuit of the feathered depredators, who, after awhile, discovering it was useless attempting to breakfast peaceably off Farmer Brunt's corn, made off to less disturbed quarters. But the early morning ramble in summer, is more than beautiful, and doubly repays the early riser.

Often has Bob been wending his way through the dewy fields, just as the author of day made his first appearance in the east, in all his vermilion splendour, looking, as he arose higher and higher in the heavens, much like some gorgeous monarch, indeed, preparing to rule the advancing day ; just when the first twitter of the lark is heard, as she rises from her grassy nest, and commences to shake the silvery dewdrops from her ready pinions, preparatory for her first essay towards high heaven. Sweet bird ! of all the feathered tribe thou art to me the best ; it is true thy plumage is sombre, thy exterior plain, but thy song is sweet and melodious, and never to be forgotten at this early hour.

“ Modest bird of earliest dawn,
Aurora owns thee for her son ;
Beauteous lark ! with plumage grey,
Harbinger of glorious day.
I hear thy voice, melodious sound,
Higher rising from the ground ;
Higher and still higher rise,
Till I lose thee in the skies.
Descending now more swiftly down,
Arrow-headed to the ground ;
Maternal care, or earthly tie,
Hath brought thee hurried from the sky.
No tuneful voice, no song of glee,
Returning down, is heard from thee.
Some anxious thought or trivial care,
Hath occupied such feelings there.
Sweet bird ! methinks in thee I view,
What every Christian real should do ;
At early morn his song of praise,
With heart and voice, should upwards raise.
But still, like thee, too oft I know,
By worldly care he’s kept below.
Too oft will earth’s attractions bind,
Too oft, too oft, the Christian’s mind.”

“ Baily,” commenced Farmer Brunt, as he and Bob were sitting round the fire one wet autumnal evening, “ how’s your ammunition getting on ? Don’t be afraid to use it, I’ll get you plenty more, when I go to market ; it is better for me to purchase a few pounds of powder and shot, than to lose bushels, I may say quarters of wheat every day, and I see we are getting the upper hand of the smaller fry ; but the Squire’s rooks are

right at it in the Ten Acres, I really believe unless you find out some way of stopping the black cawing gentry, there won't be a tater left ; they are carrying them off by wholesale ; I may say regularly digging them up."

It must be observed here, before proceeding further, that at this time, in rural districts, an erroneous opinion prevailed with respect to our pretty feathered friends ; many persons entertaining the idea that birds were the great enemy of the farmer, acted upon this foolish principle in their destruction.

So it was with Farmer Brunt. It is true, and no one will attempt to deny the same, that during the short season, when the corn stands ripe and yellow in the harvest-field, and if not protected, small birds will devour and beat out a great quantity ; but the remedy in such case is simple and inexpensive, and under the control of every person. For instance, a boy, kept a fortnight or so, will entirely save the corn from these active little self-helpers ; but did the farmer thoroughly understand the wise economy of birds, he would be the last to grudge them this small pittance, but he unfortunately too frequently sees only their present momentary annoyance, without considering their earlier and general good. Birds are a link in the mighty and glorious chain of

creation ; the destruction of which link would endanger the whole chain ; all birds, great and small, whether granivorous, insectivorous, carnivorous, or omnivorous, matters not, all for the greater portion of the year subsist almost entirely upon insects and their larvæ ; even the too often despised and condemned sparrow is an industrious insect-hunter and destroyer.

Now what a powerful agency we have here for the destruction of these little creatures, called insects ! In some parts of the world swarms of insects are more dreaded than an army with banners ; there is no means of intimidating them, they are a marching devouring army, deaf alike to the cannon's roar or musket's crack ; they mock your entreaties, and treat with contempt the puny attempts of man to arrest their progress. Silently and steadily they pursue their march, leaving behind a scene of desolation, that too often makes the owners weep,—having swept from the earth every green blade, leaving nothing for the industrious proprietor but an arid desert.

Much better for the farmer, when he walks the fields at harvest-time, to see these little pearls of creation partaking of a few grains of corn, for the whole of which he is much indebted to them, and which the report of a gun would frighten away, than to have an army, and in some in-

stances, an imperceptible army, sweeping off his hopes while yet in blade.

In some places an ignorant attempt has been made to get rid of our black cawing friends the rooks, who for centuries had been keeping watch over a certain part of the parish ; but soon, very soon, this piece of wanton cruelty and folly was followed by its just and righteous retribution ; their presence in following the plough being soon lamentably missed, by the increase of invaders they alone had the power to search out and bring to trial. Glad were the farmers to welcome back to their native elms the sable watchmen again.

Birds are a most important link, we repeat, in the chain of creation. How dull, for instance, would be the rural ramble ; how insipid the country lane, were birds wanting in the landscape ! Is not the eye pleased by their active habits and varied colouring ? the ear gratified and enchanted by their various melody ? How dull, we repeat, would be rural life were the soaring lark, familiar robin, and singing thrush absent ! They are created not only for the security of man ; but for his gratification likewise. He who made them declared them very good ; who, then, by their conduct shall pronounce them bad ?

Insects, likewise, are doubtless an important

link in this created chain. Some of them, as the bee, silkworm, cochineal, gall insect, Spanish fly, and coral worm, are very useful to man in a direct manner. Insects serve also as food for birds, fish, and reptiles; they are likewise the lowest scavengers of nature, not allowing animal or vegetable matter to remain in a putrid state, impregnating the air with a deadly malaria. See the fly, for instance, taking possession of a dead animal in which to lay her eggs, which speedily become maggots, eating the carcase into a honeycomb, and never forsaking the same until every portion of unhealthy matter has been consumed. But their name is legion, and their appetites most voracious, and increase so rapidly that scarcely have they taken wing, when they commence propagating their species.

Yes, creation is one vast, perfect and beautiful chain, the removing of one link of which, would endanger the whole. Away with the ignorant and destructive idea of Sparrow Clubs, away with the advertisements of poisons for the wholesale destruction and murder of our pretty friends! I almost think, indeed, that the legislature ought to establish a law for the protection of small birds, especially during the time of incubation. Parents and teachers should teach their children and scholars the philosophy of birds, and dis-

courage the robbing of birds' nests as a most wanton and cowardly act. But if no one will speak on this subject, let it be remembered there is One who says, "The merciful man is merciful to his beast," and without whose notice not a sparrow falls.

CHAPTER IX.

"Then dash the brimming cup aside,
 And spill its purple wine ;
 Take not its madness to thy lips,
 Let not its curse be thine ;
 'Tis red and rich, but grief and woe
 Are hid those rosy depths below."

Willis.

ONE afternoon, after Farmer Brunt had been actively engaged, as usual, perambulating his fields, and looking after the common enemy,—“I think,” said he, turning to Bob, “I think we’ll go home and see if the chatter-water’s ready ;” a contemptible designation he was accustomed to use in allusion to tea, which he gave that beverage in his younger days, when tea was considered only fit for old ladies, effeminate gentlemen, and children ; he agreed with Cobbett in its thorough condemnation, thinking, with that domestic and political economist, that its tendency served to enfeeble the system, and render the same indis-

posed for bodily exertion, and that the gossip of the tea-table proved injurious to both sexes. Bread, beer, and bacon, he always held, were the materials for a working man. "Give him tea," said he, "and he wastes his time waiting for the kettle to boil, and his strength and constitution into the bargain, and dies some fifteen years before he should die, had he only lived on proper English fare." This was his philosophy, and he never permitted his own sons to imbibe such a ridiculous liquid. When first he got married, too, he and his wife had several unpleasant squabbles on this head, but at last he consented to the introduction of the beverage, provided always the cups were very small and really of the original orthodox size. His wife, however, at last introduced him to the system, and Miss Rachel thoroughly confirmed him in the same, and now he confessed to liking a cup of tea, as he said, "as well, pretty nigh, as any old washerwoman."

So having observed to Bob, "It won't do to keep you delicate lads without your chatter-water," they made their way to the farmhouse.

"Dear brother," commenced Miss Rachel, as they entered, "how late you are, to be sure ; tea has been waiting this half-hour, and the cakes are all getting cold ; and that poor boy, too, I am sure must be wanting his very badly. Now

Molly, bring the kettle ; dear me, what a time you are to be sure ! I wish I had gone myself. Servants,—servants,—servants !” she repeated ; “really they are the great plague of my life.”

“Never mind, Rachel,” said the farmer, “I shall only want about six cups and a bushel of chatter.”

Scarcely had the farmer commenced his tea, when one of the carters called, saying “that the horse bought at the fair the day before was taken ill, would not eat his fodder, and breathed hard ; and one of the sheep,” he said likewise, “had got on his back and nearly dead.”

“Well, now, this is a pretty story,” said the farmer. “I declare to goodness that them oss-dealers ought to be exterminated ; it’s a dead take-in now, I’ll be bound. You can’t trust a fellow to buy a oss for you, but the next day something’s wrong we’n. They beat the lawyers, by gore they do, they cheat you before your eyes ; I have a great mind to say I would never buy another oss. There’s everything in plenty to-year, —grass, corn, food of every kind. God is very good, but your fellow-man can’t be trusted a moment. Here, Tom, what’s say, the ship is dead ?”

“No, Master, only got on his back, and doesn’t seem well.”

"Well, then, the ship isn't dead, nor the oss. Maybe they'll both recover ; I won't meet trouble halfway, bothered if I do. Rachie, we'll have the chatter-water."

"Now, brother, why will you call this delightful, comforting, exhilarating, unequalled beverage, by that vulgar appellative ?"

"Never mind, Rachie, what we call it, so that it comes," replied the farmer.

"Well, Rachie," commenced the farmer again, "the birds are decreasing, they are gone further afield, and I hope will forget to come back before harrest, I do, for we shall have a thumping ear of corn to-year, I know we shall."

"Yes, brother, I knew we should get on nicely, only the servants are incorrigible. There's Molly, now, constantly tormenting me ; why, only last night as ever was, she spoiled a pan of new milk,—there was a pretty loss, now ; it is enough to ruin us all, that it is. I declare to goodness that there is nothing but cheating and roguery in the world ; it was but yesterday that a man called with apples to sell,—I am almost positive they were moonshines, and grew in our orchard. The day before a man called, led by a dog, and asking to have pity on the blind. I just raised his eyelids with my finger and thumb, and, to my horror, discovered the fellow could see,—see, yes, as well

as I can ! Oh, it is dreadful ! I really think, brother, that the world must come to an end, going on so."

"I hope not, Rachie," replied the farmer, "for according to your account, folks are not fit for the change, I reckon."

"Yes, brother, it is very well for you to talk in that easy manner, when the very tea you are drinking is an imposition ; I am certain of it, for on looking into the pot the other day, after the water was off, I am satisfied that many of the leaves grew in England on the sloe bushes, and never saw China at all, and at the bottom of the cups there was sand, yes, real sand,—grit,—a most injurious thing to introduce into the system."

"Never mind, never mind, Rachie," said the farmer again ; "that last cup was a nice un, I should like just such another."

During Miss Rachel's edifying conversation, Bob was deliberating on the best means to be adopted in overcoming the Squire's sable friends, who had made a regular *coup de main* on the field of potatoes ; and, to judge from appearances, did not intend drawing off their forces until the whole field had been regularly conquered. For days Bob had been endeavouring to get within shot of them, in order to recover one or two for scarecrows ; but all to no purpose, as they were

always cautious to place sentinels upon the highest branches of the surrounding trees ; and the most provoking part of the business was, that just as he came within 'shot, at the moment of elevating his gun, the ominous "caw" was sounded, when up the whole flock rose in a perpendicular direction, each with a potato, a few of which would have gone far to fill the bushel. Bob at last, however, arrived at the conclusion, that to endeavour to steal upon them in this way was useless ; so hit upon another far more efficient plan. Having procured two or three steel traps, he baited each with a potato, and planted them amongst the potato haum, allowing the potato only to be seen ; and the next morning, to his great satisfaction, two were caught, and fluttering, but not another within sight ; for, as they soared aloft, they plainly saw in what a predicament their friends were in, so never ventured near the field again ; but, in order to strengthen their memory, Bob hung the dead ones up on the spot on which they were captured.

I allude to this more particularly to show how easy it is to stop the devastations of birds when they occasionally prove injurious, although otherwise the friends of man, without the ignorant and wicked idea of attempting their utter annihilation.

"Here's a pretty bother !" said Molly, coming

into the house one unusually hot day ; “ why, as I am a living sinner, if they ain’t bringing home Sam and Tom, and they say both have been sun-struck ! ”

“ Well now, if that ain’t a most awkward piece of business, and no mistake ; nothing short of an inquest, I’ll be bound ; and I shall get mightily reprimanded for allowing the chaps to reap in the middle of the day,” said the farmer.

Presently the bearers, with the sufferers, entered the house, the latter of whom presented a deathlike appearance ; indeed, being quite black in the face.

“ Poor fellows ! ” said the farmer ; “ I didn’t want them to work like that, I didn’t now.”

But, after closer inspection, the olfactories gave evident proofs that the sufferers were not victims of *coup de soleil*, but of something more terrestrial ; in fact, there were unmistakeable evidences that the patients had been making too free with alcoholic drinks. It appeared, from inquiry, that a ship-captain, whose vessel lay in the canal, near the cornfield, had been treating the simple swains to too bountiful a supply of spirits, and which proved so injurious to the same. The farmer, when he had discovered his mistake, laughed outright, saying, at the same time,

“ Well, to be sure now, what a downright ass I

must have been that I didn't think of that before ! ”

“ Yes, brother,” commenced Miss Rachel ; “ it is just what I say ; servants, I declare, are the plague of our lives ; they are, I say again without fear of any contradiction, a drunken, lazy set. Here, now, is a pretty disgraceful affair, and if one should die, here will be an inquest, reporting us all over the country ! ”

The doctor having arrived, confirmed the suspicions, and pronounced the men to be deeply suffering from the too free indulgence of ardent spirits, which in all probability would end, in one instance, if not in both, in immediate death ; and, in a few minutes, the man called Sam succumbed. Molly, running, entered the room, looking dreadfully alarmed.

“ What is the matter, Molly ? ” said the farmer.

“ Oh, master, Sam's gone dead, quite dead ; and Tom is raving like a madman ! ”

“ Poor fellow ! ” said the farmer again ; “ he was a hardworking chap as any on the farm, and has been with me five years come Michaelmas ; but drink ! drink ! thou great destroyer of soul and body, would that I could banish thee for ever ! ”

“ Oh, master ! ” commenced Molly again ; “ oh, do come and see Tom ; he is right mad like,

throws his arms about, and talks so queer that I am afeared to go nigh him, that I am now ! ”

Tom was evidently suffering from fits of delirium, from the effect of the alcohol, and running on in a most incoherent manner, ever and anon calling to his poor dead companion, as—

“ Sam, my boy ! Oh, how hot ! My head ! my head ! There they go ! Awful ! awful ! Reap away, ye witches ! Go it, ye demons ! Yes, there they go again ! Grind away, ye imps ! grind away ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Sam, you fool, don’t go ! Drink, ye devils ! drink ! My head ! my head ! Where am I ? ”

A few moments’ cessation, and again the patient would relapse into his former state.

“ Look ! sailors reaping—reaping the sea ! Cut away ! Oh, could I get loose ! Sam, crush them ! smash them ! Imps, leave me ! leave me ! here they come ! Horrid sharks ! frightful jaws ! See them rising out of the sea ! ”

“ Oh, Miss Rachel ! ” commenced Molly again ; “ what a dreadful, awful state the poor chap must be in, to be sure ! Mythink he must have seen all the hobgoblins Betty reads about in her story-book.”

“ Yes, Molly,” answered Miss Rachel ; “ and perhaps he will wander beyond come-back too, as his companion has done. This all comes of

drink, Molly. I have not patience ; I can scarcely contain myself when I think of it. There must now be an inquest and funeral for one, and the doctor for the other."

But with the attention of the doctor, and the poultices prepared by Miss Rachel, Tom appeared, at times, to be coming round, when again he would relapse into a prolonged fit of delirium, repeating, in a most incoherent manner—

"Sam, save me ! Where am I ? Rolling sea ! grinning monsters ! Tear away, ye imps ! Go up the ladder ! up the ladder I say, go !"

"A bad case," said the doctor, shaking his head ; "constantly relapsing ; and, unless he can be kept calm and quiet as possible, there is the greatest danger of confirmed madness, or perhaps death itself."

"What a sad affair this is, to be sure !" said the farmer the day after ; "here I have been at Old Farm all my life nearly, yet did I never have anything happen of this kind before."

"Yes," replied Miss Rachel ; "you are too easy, brother, too easy, I must repeat it, with servants."

"I can't prevent people drinking, can I ? Must I remain home from market, and every other business, to prevent people killing themselves ?" said the farmer. "Here, we shall have

the people presently to hold the inquest over poor Sam. What now, Molly?"

"Laws, why if there ain't the coronation inquest men coming across Five Acres! I hope when I dies I sha'n't have so many men to look at me I do, now. Dear me, to be sure, what a lot of live ones to look at one that's dead! There, go away," said Miss Rachel, "and don't stand gaping there, but go, and show them to the granary."

"Dear brother," commenced Miss Rachel again, "what a serious business this inquest is to be sure, bringing so many strangers over the farm, that really one scarcely feels the place to be one's own! How I long for peace!—I do indeed,—and hope I shall never witness another coroner's inquest."

"I trust not, indeed, Rachel," replied her brother. "Why here I have been at Old Farm my whole life nearly, as I said before, yet never had such an affair happen; but what is to be will be, and there's no use talking about it, I guess; we must make the best of a bad job, remembering that nothing is so bad but might have been worse; it might have been Tom, as well as Sam. Fifty ship might have been struck by the lightning the other day instead of one, only God says, So far, but no farther. Tom is now getting

better, and we have cause to be thankful for that."

"Well, Molly," said the farmer, as that domestic entered again, "have you directed the gentlemen to the granary?"

"Yes, master," answered Molly; "and they are all sitting round the table, of all the world as if they were going to have a good dinner."

The coroner, an important, active, stout-looking gentleman, from the county town, was soon engaged assembling his jury; when, presently, the foreman spoke—

"Please your honour, they ain't all come yet."

"Who's not come? Who's absent? Who is the man that dares keep the coroner and jury awaiting his behest? Give me his name; get some one else," said the coroner, "get some else. I will teach that man, that he shall not with impunity keep this august Court waiting. I will commit him for contempt of the same. Does he think, I wonder, that a coroner possesses a superfluity of time, that he must await the pleasure of a jurymen? I will let him know that a coroner is invested with supreme authority from the highest court in this realm. Call Farmer Brunt, and let him take his place."

"Please your honour, the man is come now," said the foreman.

“Oh, he is, is he? and pray Sir, state the reason that has dared you to keep this important Court waiting your pleasure in this most thoughtless and ignorant manner,—a court assembled for the purpose of considering the accidents touching the death of one of her Majesty’s lieges. Don’t you know, Sir, that I have power to commit you for contempt of court?”

“Yes, your honour,” replied the man; “but I hope you won’t exercise it just now, and if so, put me to a merciful punishment, for just as I was on the point of leaving home, my wife was taken all over bad like, and presently presented as fine a boy to the parish as ever your honour clapped eyes on. So you see, yer honour, I was obliged to attend to the living a little, before the dead.”

“Very well,” said the official, “I suppose you must be excused on such real grounds.”

“Now gentlemen,” commenced the coroner, “you are summoned and empanelled here in the sight of God, and in the name of your most Gracious Sovereign, to consider without anticipation, speculation, or partiality, the circumstances touching the death of one of her Majesty’s subjects. You will think, consider, and act as becometh twelve true men, remembering that you are bound by oath to do so, so that, should deceased have come unfairly or otherwise by his

death, the how or wherefore may be decided by this impartial and just tribunal. Gentlemen, you will now retire and view the body. You observe, gentlemen," continued the coroner, "that death has not been accelerated by any external injury or violence ; we infer, therefore, that it must have occurred from some derangement of the internal physiological structure,—how or by what, will be more easily decided after examining a few witnesses. Call the man who was with him in the field."

"I remember," said Tom, "having been with Sam reaping in the field, when the captain of the 'Gipsy Queen' came along and axed us to go we'n and have a glass of grog ; we went, and had one each, and having found it mighty good like, had another, and then another, and so on, I reckoned six when I began to feel all over queer like. I might have had more but don't remember anything after the sixth glass, I can't call anything to mind a'ter that."

By the coroner, "Do you think your late companion had more than you had?"

"I can't say, your honour, the last I remember seeing of him was stretched along on the deck."

"And what do you think the spirit was?"

"I can't say, your honour, quite certain, but guess a little mixed, but can't say certain."

"That will do. Call Farmer Brunt. Well, farmer, and what do you know of the case?"

"I knows but little," replied the farmer; "I only knows that as I was sitting in my room, Molly rushed in, saying that she thought they were bringing the men home, either drunk or sun-struck; for a time too I really feared the sun had been too much for them; but after a little consideration, discovered the men had been drinking, and soon after the man Sam died, and that is all I know respecting the case."

After the doctor and several other witnesses, it came to Molly's turn, who, when asked what she considered deceased died from, answered, "Drink, I 'spects, your honour."

"And what ground have you for thinking so?" inquired the coroner.

"I think it was the Ten Acres they were reaping in," replied Molly.

"Ay, ay, woman," said the coroner. "Woman, you don't understand me. What do you think he had been drinking?"

"Oh, spirits, your honour."

"But was it brandy, or gin, or rum,—the kind I mean, the kind I mean."

"Well, I don't exactly know the sort of 'scription, but I rather 'spects it was brandy."

"Why, what proof have you for so thinking?"

"Laws, Sir, I don't know the proofs and the like on't, only I heard Sam say he thought 'twas brandy, but laws now, I don't know, I 'spects."

"Call Miss Rachel," said the coroner.

"Yes, I know the man," commenced that lady ; "we called him Sam, an' like all servants he was a great plague, and much too fond of drink. I remember on one occasion my brother sent him with the horses to take a load of wheat to the mill, when on returning home, he became intoxicated, threw the waggon ; and it was the greatest mercy in the world the horses were not killed or disabled for life. For this in some degree I blame my brother, he is too easy, too indulgent with them."

"My good lady," commenced the coroner, "will you be so good as to confine yourself a little more to the subject before us ?"

"Yes, I will ; this leads me to it. When I saw them crossing the fields I knew there was something wrong with the servants ; that they had been up to no good I felt sure."

"My good lady, do you think deceased died from intoxicating drinks ?" inquired the patient and polite coroner.

"Do I think so, indeed ? Why there is not the shadow of doubt upon that point, and the only wonder is that many more of the class don't die

from the same cause. Think, indeed ! it is no use thinking about it, it does not require that foolish waste of time," returned Miss Rachel.

"That will do, my dear lady; thank you, Madam, I will not detain you longer," said the polite coroner again. "Call the captain of the 'Gipsy Queen.'"

"Well, your honour," commenced the captain, giving his trousers the characteristic twist, and turning the quid in his mouth, "the young men came aboard the 'Gipsy,' and I gave them the usual 'lowance of grog, not of course expecting it would have the effect we have seen. Why, your honour, we call it splicing the main brace, but it seems to have onspliced him and sent him to Old Davy. My wiggies can take the quantity off without a flounder, and I must say that I was confoundedly bothered to see the landsman brought hull downwards, with reefed topsail, and a stiff wind in the teeth, when my fellows were two sheets in the wind. I can say no more, your honour, it's no use tacking about, or maybe I shall get caught in a worse squall; therefore I'll just haul in now, and let it drive before the wind."

"Really, captain, you must excuse me," said the coroner, "but unfortunately I can't interpret your nautical phraseology. But do you think the

deceased died from taking too much for him, otherwise a wholesome beverage?"

"Well, your honour, I should think he shipped too much for the strength of his timbers; I should think without dodging it was too much for the young man."

"That will do, captain; that will do, captain," said the coroner.

"Gentlemen," commenced the coroner again, "you have now heard all the evidence likely to be obtained; will you be so good as to come to some conclusion respecting the death of the deceased?" After some time spent in disagreeing on items of minor importance, as whether it was gin, rum, or brandy that was the evil spirit in the case,

"Why don't you agree?" inquired the foreman. "Don't you know you are keeping us all, and the coroner too, who will be precious put out presently, I can tell ye? Why it is as plain as noonday that he died from the effects of too much spirits, which drove him away; there wer'n't room for every kind."

"That will do very well, neighbour; but how do you know there wasn't something of an injurious nature mixed with it, such as pison for instance?"

"How do I know, you goose? Why, well enough

to be sure. Don't ye see, if that had been the case, the other would have died too, you stupid?"

"I want to get home, to my shop," said another. "It is horrid to be kept here like this; when, in my humble opinion, it is all as clear as spring water that he was suffocated with spirits."

"Bother to the whole of you," said the father of the increase. Why don't you come to a conclusion? Don't you know you are keeping his honour? and I can't stay here all the day thinking of the dead; I have the living to feed. .

"Gentlemen," said the coroner, "do you agree?"

"We do," answered the foreman.

"And what is your conclusion?"

"That the deceased died from too free use of intoxicating fluids, administered to him by the crew of the 'Gipsy Queen,' but whom we exonerate from all blame in the matter, but recommend the same not to be so liberal in future, and during the hot weather, in their spiritual gifts."

"Gentlemen," returned the coroner, "I have the honour to close this inquiry, and express to you the satisfaction I feel at the patience you have exhibited during the discharge of this your public duty."

"Now," said Miss Rachel to her brother, "I

see there is no end of trouble, till we get rid of servants. Here we have had the inquest, and now we must have the funeral ; upon my word it is too bad, it really is. Do, brother, look out for a cheap undertaker to bury the poor chap ; I saw an advertisement the other day, where the whole is accomplished in a most quiet and decent manner for about five pounds ; now I think that is pretty moderate. You know, brother, it is no use spending more than is necessary upon the dead ; they want it not, it does them no good, and there are so many living to whom such money would be of the greatest service."

" You are right, Rachie, so far ; we know it does the dead no good, but still there are the living to please, even in this respect, a little. For my own part, I don't care what they do with me when I am no more ; but Sam has relations, whom it would please to see him put under the ground in a decent manner. Mythinks, I'll have old Jet out and ride over to carpenter Sawyer ; he'll do it as moderate and well as any of your professionals, and without half the bother, I'll be bound for'n."

So, on the following day the carpenter appeared, and took the necessary orders for the funeral, viz. a few pairs of black gloves, full size, some half-dozen crape hat-bands, hired for the

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occasion, with a little ribbon for Molly's cap and bonnet, as she had declared, "cost what it might, she would go in mourning for the poor fellow, as he was the very best chap her master had ever had,—allis good tempered and natured, would bring her anything from the shop, and didn't mind going over to the poorhouse, occasionally, and take her poorer sister a few apples, a little snuff, or an ounce or two of tea."

"I'll go in mourning for you, poor soul," she repeated. "It isn't many friends poor folks got to do anything for um, in this blessed world. No, poor folks got no friends to lose; and if it's my very last shilling, the very last bit of siller, it shall go to buy a yard or two of black ribbon for him, poor soul! Maybe he'll see me we't on, and will take it out a kind of 'spect for'n, who knows? Yes, he's in another world, that's true, the pa'son said so last Sunda'; yes, he's alive enough, I reckon, somewhere up yonder in the skies. Laws like, I should like to see how poor folks gets on up there. Laws a mercy, what a queer talk I am having to be sure! Why, it's not his body that's up there; Mr. Sawyer's going to put that up in the graveyard, but it is his think, I reckon that's up in the sky."

"Molly, see who is at the door," called out the farmer.

"Yes, master, 'tis Mr. Sawyer; and he says he has one of the most snug and comfortablest graves in the whole churchyard for poor Sam. I am glad on't, master, as if it were for myself; Sam deserves it, he does, a grave as good as any prince. I likes comfortable graves for poor souls when they can't stop on the surface any longer. Never mind, Sam, we shall be a'ter you soon, poor chap."

"Yes, Molly, you are right there; you know our souls never die," said the farmer; "and of course we shall be united again."

"I hope so, master," said Molly.

"There is no doubt of it," returned the farmer. "You heard the pa'son speaking on't on Sunda', didn't you?"

"Yes, master, and he is very learned; gets it out of them big books, I reckon. But yet, master, mythinks I can't make it out how, after we are dead, we shall go on living, a thousand and a million of years, ever and ever. Mythinks sometimes I should like there to be an end on't. Oh, it's a power too much learning for poor Molly; can't make it out no ways. To my mind it's much like the sun, moon, and stars; they's been always shining, my old granny told me that, and so they'll go on, long after poor old Molly's up in the churchyard. God made it, and works it all, and yet he sees poor Sam now, and is kind to'n, I 'spects."

CHAPTER X.

“Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, hounds are knelling,
Merrily mingle they,
Waken lords and ladies gay.”

Scott.

THE funeral party, when completed, presented rather a whimsical and grotesque appearance. Grouped together were long white gabardines, with blue coats and brass buttons, and hats which, having stood the battle and the breeze for many years, had now settled down to a durable, never ending brown, the first two or three of which gloried in second-hand hatbands, provided by Mr. Sawyer.

Molly and Betty likewise followed, dressed in white straw bonnets, trimmed with black ribbon, and gloves to match. Slowly and silently the procession advanced; here was in fact mourning in all its rural simplicity; there was little exterior

pomp, but in one of the followers at least, it was heartfelt. Molly sobbed, as she held the white pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, lent her for the occasion by the ever active, thoughtful Miss Rachel.

“Yes,” Molly sobbed, as she repeated, “Poor folks have no friends to lose.”

Farmer Brunt likewise followed, in order to superintend the proceedings, and well it was he did so, as the sequel will unfold. At length, and after many times changing the bearers, the funeral arrived at the churchyard and grave, where, after some time awaiting the advent of the clergyman, to the no small annoyance and astonishment of the farmer, who had for some time exhibited signs of impatience, but which patience had to be more and more exercised, as the clergyman did not arrive for an hour or more after the appointed time for the funeral,—

Presently Snipp, who filled the joint offices of sexton and clerk, came up, and whispered in the farmer's ear that Mr. Allaway had gone hunting that morning with his lordship's hounds, and, he was very sorry to say, had not yet returned, but he expected him that minute and every other minute, and hoped the farmer would exercise a little more patience, as he could not at all account for the long delay of the clergyman, he having

given him the proper and due notice the evening before. But it appeared that Reynard sly had led the excited and too willing hunters much beyond the mark at first anticipated, and to this circumstance was owing the unfortunate delay in the appearance of the clergyman, whom, after again awaiting a considerable time, the farmer saw pass the churchyard gate, whip and spur, on his way to the vicarage, in order to change his gay hunting attire for the more priestly habiliments.

The farmer, seeing the clergyman pass on his jaded hunter, broke forth, "No, I won't stand it any longer, dang'd if I do; I gave the proper notice, I won't keep the people waiting this cold day, just after a shower of rain too, to please even the Queen herself. Here, Sawyer, help me down with the coffin, you and I will bury the poor chap."

Snipp stood aghast, and resisted, as well as he could, this piece of profanity and sacrilege.

"Stand away, stand away, Snipp," said the farmer; to which demand, having been overpowered, Snipp consented, and gave up the contest in despair, and commenced wending his steps across the churchyard, in order to meet the clergyman; but quickly recollecting himself, hurried back again, saying,—

"What! will you bury the body without the proper funeral service?"

"Yes, I reckon we shall, Snipp ; unless you'll read it," replied the farmer, " no one else will, I fancy."

Snipp looked more astonished than ever, and his eyes and mouth opened more than they were wont to do ; the shovel dropped from his hand, and his whole body threatened a state of instant petrification, and to be left, perhaps for an indefinite period, standing on the side of the grave ; for never had he been so astonished and alarmed before. Snipp stood silent indeed as Lot's wife, as the carpenter and farmer lowered the remains of the poor servant to mingle with their mother earth ; after which the farmer took off his hat and holding it in his hand (the red pocket-handkerchief fell out), commenced, as he looked round on the followers, " Friends, may we hope his soul is enjoying the like repose the body appears now to be possessing ; friends, may we all remember we too are mortal, and that one day not long hence our bodies will be like his, low in the grave, mingling with the clods of the valley ; friends, this silent open grave is kindly preaching to us, ' Be ye also ready.' (Snipp took off his hat.) " His was sudden death ; ours may be as sudden," continued the farmer. (Snipp scratched his head.) " Friends, believe savingly in Christ, and he will enable you to triumph over the grave ; he will

help you over the gloomy flood to the bright and happy Canaan." (Amen, loudly responded Snipp.) As the farmer was thus speaking, the Rev. Mr. Allaway appeared in view, looking very anxious, and nearly out of breath from the speed at which he had been travelling, and as he approached the grave, appeared thunderstruck at the proceedings, and his voice trembled with indignation, as he commenced, "My good people, why did you allow that old and stupid maniac to commit this serious indiscretion, this sacrilegious deed? Why did you not, you sensible people, prevent such a poor, lost, undone lunatic committing such a wicked and wilful proceeding?"

"I am not a poor, lost, undone maniac," returned the farmer; "you know that too well. Had I been that poor afflicted person, you might have kept this funeral with impunity. No, here's no poor dependant, but a determined, sane, too sane a man. You thought perhaps this was a poor menial's funeral, consequently of little notice, and friends too poor or few to speak; but here I am, and speak I will."

"Man," replied Mr. Allaway, "say no more, or I shall be tempted to forget myself."

"Yes, that you have done, too much already," replied the farmer; "you know that. Remember you that day, not long ago? mind I don't pull the

gown over your yead. Enough, I see you do ; you remember, I remember ; that will do ; I'll say no more."

" I'll read the burial service," said the clergyman."

" Not one word," replied the farmer ; " the dead require it not, the living would be disgusted by such a proceeding. No, that exercise must flow from other lips to take effect."

" But I can excuse myself for this delay," observed the clergyman.

" I am glad you can," replied the farmer, and looking round invited his friends at once to retire.

Snipp, by this time, had completed the work of filling in the grave. The farmer stepped up to him, and placed five shillings into his hand, which Snipp spat upon, and placed in his breeches pocket. The people proceeded towards their homes ; the Rev. Mr. Allaway made his way into the vestry ; and Snipp recommenced digging the grave he had been working at in the morning.

" Well, well," said he, as he rested halting upon his spade, " wonders will never cease, that's certain. Why, I have been clerk, sexton, and all for thirty years, and my old dad before me, yet did I never hear or see such a thing as for the mourners to bury the corpse ; no, never in all

my blessed days ; why how queer it sounds ! no one would believe it,—if I told them. Well, they say, you must not be astonished at anything until the world's upside down and the people standing on their heads, and I believe it now. I made sure I should lose the fee anyhow, in this earthquake, but 'pon my life now, if that old Farmer Brunt ain't a very good old fellow, but a very queer dog,—there's a mighty lot more in his head than folks generally find in children's. Well, I am a lucky mole too ; here's five shillings in a few hours,—good pay, good pay,—and this has been really a slap-up week altogether—five funerals, eh ? what do think of that, Snipp ? Why you will ride in a coach if it goes on like this (not a mourning one I hope). A month ago I was beginning to despair a bit ; it never rains but it powers ; here was a whole month barely breaking earth, but now in the space of one little week, two real pounds of yeller gould. Ay, they come in scuds, and so they will, most likely, now they have begun ; but if this young spark goes on in this way hunting with me lord's hounds, and other little games they say he's up to, well then, good bye to our buryings and weddings. It vexes me, now that it does, body and soul, his going on so ; but what can I do, a poor underground toad like me ? I was sorry for Farmer Brunt, yet what could I

say ? I expected every moment to be swept off the face of the earth,—that is, off this churchyard earth ; it vexes me, I say it does. I like to see things in graveyards carried out neatly and genteel like ; but there's something atween our spark and Farmer Brunt more than a grave ; they say he has—ah, well, let others say, I'll only hear ; hold your tongue, Snipp,—a slow tongue makes a wise head ; but there's something Brunt knows more than I know, or what did he mean by saying he would pull the ' gown over his yead,' and, ' forget you that day ?' and the rest on't ; no, mark me, Snipp, he'll never say anything to Brunt again on that subject, and all will go off now right enough, dig, dig, dig ; but, my eye, here comes the gentleman ; talk of the devil, and his imps appear, eh ?”

“Hollo, Snipp! Hollo, Snipp!” commenced Mr. Allaway ; “ how came you to allow Farmer Brunt to perform the funeral obsequies over the corpse to-day ?”

“ Yes, Sir ; yes, Sir, I told him of it, I told him of it, Sir, but I tell you how it is, Sir. Farmer Brunt is an awkward, headstrong sort of man, very stubborn to deal with. I told him of it, Sir ; I say I told him of it ; and I was very sorry to hear him speak to you, Sir, in that foolish and unbecoming manner,—to speak to you, a gentle-

man of 'birth,' edication, and all (the minister winced), and he only a plain, ignorant farmer. I felt angry with him, I did."

"Yes, yes; well, well," said the clergyman. "I think I must give up the hounds, perhaps it is not quite the amusement for a clergyman; at any rate it places me in the awkward position of being censured by this rural herd."

"I think I would, Sir; I think I would," answered Snipp; "for you know, Sir, country people say anything but their prayers, and then they whistle."

The clergyman laughed. "Right, quite right, you're right, Snipp," he replied; "and here's half-a-crown for your wit. Mind and get the church well aired by the morning-service." And away went the minister, stepping over the graves towards the parsonage, whistling and tuning, as he did so, some light-hearted ditties which occurred to him at the moment.

"Bless me," commenced Snipp, again viewing the half-crown, jerking his trousers, and giving a knowing wink, "'pon my word, 'pon my word now, these are glorious times. No, he's not quite easy like; he won't say anything to Farmer Brunt, I know. Not he, indeed! I thought I should have heard more, but he has followed the little cunning foxes too much for that, my thinks."

Yes, he knows I heard a thing or two ; he'll give up hunting, eh ? I hope he may ; or I shall soon have to give up digging, I guess. Be quiet, Snipp, be quiet, Snipp, you'll take in more another time ; the quiet sow eats the most wash. Dig, dig, dig ; how precious hard this ground is to be sure ! want some rain on't, the shower to-day hasn't mellowed it a bit. Oh, I see what 'tis ; 'tis a bone that is so deuced hard. Yes," (taking it in his hand,) "'tis a leg-bone too ; and as sure as I am here and he's there, it was the leg-bone of old John Stubbs ; it was close here my old dad said he was buried ; now I'll just rest a moment, and call him to mind a bit. Yes, he was a shoemaker in the village some fifty years ago or thereabouts, a clever sort of chap too, I fancy,—so I have heard the old man say ; he was a bit of a lawyer, and could physic too a little. Yes, this bone just corresponded with his height, he was an extraordinary tall man, and this leg-bone I am sure just fitted such a fellow ; a mighty customer for running races too, I have heard tell ; many's the race this bone has carried his owner to win in, I'll lay ; and they say he could sing a song as well as here and there one ; and such ghost stories he would tell the boys, when mending their shoes, till their hair stuck up like pigs' bristles, and they were afered to go in the dark

for a fortnight a'ter. Poor old John, maybe now he has seen all these ghosts he used to tell them about; but here's pretty well the last of poor old Stubbs,—earth we are, and earth we come to, true enough; but I'll bury that bone again presently out of respect to'n, and so we go on. Hark! there's the old clock, I'll just have my bread and cheese; it won't do to fast too long, or instead of digging for others, shall want some one to dig for me," and away stalked the gravedigger, in order to find the same hidden under the tombstone where he had left it in the morning, humming, as he proceeded,

"The gravedigger's task is to dig, dig, dig,
For many who would rather live, live, live;
The old and the young, the rich and the fair,
The gravedigger alike takes under his care."

"That's true enough," said Snipp; "all sorts are here, and many have their characters with them but we must be careful in believing the whole on't; as we know what is said about epitaphs. I am precious glad I learnt to read when I was a boy; I can't come it perhaps quite so well as our pa'son, but I can spell out a great deal. Poor old Burch, the schoolmaster, said I took my letters in sooner than any boy he had ever known. Let me see, I knew the whole twenty-six gentlemen backwards and forwards before I had the honour

of attending his academy six months ; but poor old Peda's under my care now, and while I think on't, I'll go and see what they say about him. Yes, here he is." Reads,

" Here lies John Burch, we knew him well,
He taught us how to read and spell ;
He taught us how to sum and write,
He taught us likewise how to fight !
But here he lies, the good old man,
Dispute it now if any can ;
A better never drove a pen ;
He wrote the wills of many men."

" Hum ! some on't's true and some isn't," said the sexton ; " he could write copper-plate I know, and the fighting part he understood I can swear, for I shall never forget the ossing he gi'd me when I hid his cane ; but I liked him, poor old fellow, and there were many worse than he, if you only knew where to find them. Here's another alongside ; what does this say, I wonder ?" Reads,

" All you that read and pass me by,
As you are now, so once was I ;
As I am now, so you must be,
Therefore prepare to follow me."

" And underneath some one has writ an answer to it, in pencil." Reads,

" To follow you I'm not content,
Unless I know which way you went."

" That's a good un," said the gravedigger ;
" that sarves him just right—too conceited a deal

for mortal man. I am glad I can read, I say; for some of these rhymes are mighty funny, and pass away the dinner-hour amazingly. Here's a precious old one here, grown over with moss; my eye! he has been here nearly a hundred winters. Eh? now what does that say, I wonder? I should like to know what sort of people lived all them years back." Reads,

"Here lies John Stokes, who clocks and watches made,
Though never taught this, that, or any trade;
His watch, wound up, went on for many a day;
But now is down and mouldering to decay."

"Well, he was a clever fellow, and no mistake; it was a pity he ever died; we want clever watchmakers and menders like him. Now, why, here's my ticker goes so badly, that it very nigh threw me out with two funerals last week. Watchmakers, mythink, are much on a par with doctors,—one touch forwards and two back, and all to the tune of two-and-sixpence; but if old Stokes was on the surface, he would find some of them out, I reckon.

"And who is this?—short and sweet, anyhow." Reads,

"Here lies Tim Small, we ne'er shall see him more;
He used to wear an old drab coat, all buttoned down before."

"Small enough!" said Snipp; "seems like he knew how to take care of himself, anyhow;

didn't do much good in the world, I fancy, if he closed his mind and soul as he did his body ; seems to me if that is all you can say about him, his corner didn't miss him much when he left it. And here's another precious old stone, grown over with moss and ivy." Reads again,

" Here lies the Earl of Hunting's fool,
Folks called him Dickey Pearce ;
His folly served to make folks laugh
When wit and mirth were scarce.
Dickey, alas ! is dead and gone,
What matters me to cry !
Dickeys enough are left behind
To laugh at by-and-by."

" No, I sha'n't play the woman on his account, never fear, Mr. Stone ! A funny sort of chap ; no doubt a fool too, eh ? They say it takes a wise man to make one of that sort, no doubt he fooled the money out of the pockets of some of the rich uns ; a fancy sort of chap, I reckon ; played his game well, I'll be bound, now ; didn't play the fool for nothing. No, I won't cry ; I can't cry !

" And bless my body, here's a stone standing over the dust of one of my profession—an old gravedigger. I'll read that, anyhow, and that will be enough for to-day ; some day I'll write them down on a piece of paper, they are so mighty comic." Reads,

"Here lies John Mole, sexton; he died seventeen hundred and—"

"Nothing; gone out the rest; old Time, I s'pose, put his rusty finger on't. But here follows the poetry; what a precious lot of poets there must have been in those days! I wonder if they'll poetise me a little when I am in this situation." Reads,

"Here lies the body of old John Mole;
His body, mark, not his soul;
His soul, too big for any grave,
Is gone to bliss, and therefore saved.
He was a sexton, brave and strong,
And buried all who came along;
He buried corpses by the dozen,
And this was put up by his cousin."

"Queer fish, Mr. Mole, I lay," commenced Snipp; "plenty of trade, too, in his day; buried them by the dozen! That must have been excellent times for the sexton, at any rate; should think there must have been an epidemic cholera, perhaps, or something of that sort. Well, Snipp, your turn will come, one day or other, never fear. Bother me," said the sexton, looking across the graveyard, "if there ain't them three fellows again. Holla there! you fellows, you be off there; let me have no more of your tomfoolery again. Be off, I say; be off there."

This address was delivered by the sexton to three tall, burly-looking fellows, who, through the

day, had been giving him considerable trouble, by their sudden and repeated attempts to have some employment in the Sexton's Acre, which could be easily determined by observing the implements they carried on their shoulders. The three men, brothers and idiots, were the sons of a deceased shoemaker. During the life of the father, the men got on tolerably well, seldom ever having made acquaintance with the gnawings of hunger ; but now the grand provider was gone, the parish allowance, considered by the managers of such bounties enough for three usual appetites, proved little enough for the unnatural appetites of the brothers ; who, after eating their own allowance ; were in the habit of perambulating the streets, looking through the windows of their neighbours engaged in the midday meal, calling them greedy dogs, daring them to eat all themselves, etc., without remembering Tom or Jack, as the case might be. This, of course, became an intolerable nuisance, and the parish at last had them duly cared for. However, on this occasion, they had been feeling unusually hungry, and believing, with good proof, that the old father's absence was the reason of the sad calamity, had placed their heads together—the heads of idiots, it is true,—and so determined on exhuming the old man. So these, men in

strength and stature, but less than infants in mind, came with pickaxe and shovel, and were in the act of commencing the work, when Snipp inquired what they were doing there.

To which they replied, "Getting the old man up again, to be sure ; he has been long enough down here in the cold, ain't he ?"

In these men we see an awful visitation. Who is there that complains they have nothing in this world ? Reader, let me ask you, have you your intellect, eyesight, speech, hearing ? Thousands have not ! If you enjoy them, repine not ; be careful of them, and thank God.

The sexton, having settled the affair with the idiots, resumed his occupation, digging the before-mentioned grave ; and having sunk himself a foot or so deeper underground, lets out a little of his mind, not only upon his old squaw ; but likewise found vent a little moment for the pressure bearing on his thoughts, on the subject of orthodox *versus* heterodox as practised in his church.

"Won't Peggy be pleased," he commenced, "with this lucky day ! She shall have some real Scotch to-night, on the strength on't. Strange crettures women-folk, they put their bacce up their noses to take it, I puts mine in my mouth for the purpose ;" at the same time taking out a steel tobacco-box, introduced an old quid of the

frugal weed into his mouth. "Dig, dig, dig,—here we go again ; but this has been an extraordinary day. Won't Peggy be astonished, that's all ! And now I think on't, I wonder if that poor chap was sprinkled when he was a young 'un. Mr. Allaway didn't ask that on this occasion ; yet he is amazingly particular with some on um ; now if he ain't been sprinkled, I wonder how he will get over that neglect in the other country. It's not at all a perfect system in my eye, because a poor fellow might be drowned, killed by a lion, or the likes, then I suppose every blessed one of them goes to the bad, if such as Mr. Allaway has omitted to drop some water upon their precious faces. Oh dear me, mythinks we are left in poor hands in this lower world sometimes ! I can't make it out nohow ; odd times we live in, true enough. The blind leading the blind ; and so they'll go on, I reckon, till they fall in here, the leader and the led ;" and Snipp stamped his foot on the ground. "Now I'll go home," said he, "and see if Peggy has the stew ready." And the gravedigger, with spade on shoulder, stalked home to his cottage, close by the copse.

"Rachel," commenced Farmer Brunt, "folks tell me that our feast commences in a day or two ; how are the puddings and pies getting on, eh, Rachie ? I should like to see all the pantry shelves

covered with dishes to-year, for I don't intend being behind on this occasion ; there shall be no mistake in that. I'll keep open house to all my neighbours and friends. I like hospitality at these times, — downright open-handed and hearted hospitality ; not any of your make-believes, make-pretences,—that's what I call a fast, not a feast ; puts one in mind of Mr. Warton's story of the lady who prided herself that she had provided just enough and none to spare ; no, there was none to spare ; whether there was enough is another matter. This year I want a good feast ; I know the thing is going a little out of fashion ; times are fast altering in farmhouse life ; get rid of all trouble is the system, struggling for existence, and do nothing that costs a little work. Everything, I repeat, is changing ; the good old friendly hospitable ways are going out, and selfish, suspicious, cold, mean, miserable ones coming in. Why, soon there won't be any old-fashioned farmhouses, with their wide chimneys for drying bacon in, and all that sort of thing. No, now it is boarding-school instead of dairy ; carpets in the place of oak plank ; the brewer instead of brewing ; the baker instead of baking ; and very soon, if it goes on so, the servants will all be on board wages, and the milk sent away to be made into butter, for I am sure it will be considered ungen-

teel to touch such a dirty animal as a cow. What poor mimics we are in this day,—plenty of gentility without the ability ! It's wrong, I say it is ; it is all wrong. Farmers used to be plain, honest folks, with their pockets well lined ; but all is swallowed up now, I fancy,—fast times, these railway times running away from the money times, going to town and bringing it into the country,—that is, the expenses and fashion on't, without the means. I say, give me the old farmhouse, with thatched roof, that keeps out the heat in summer, and cold in winter ; the hearth with faggots blazing away (that cost nothing), with comfortable corners on each side, and fitches over head ; these are pictures I like to see in farmhouses ; bother to their new-fangled notions ! Why, they are positively afraid now of a good feast for fear of spoiling their Turkey rugs ! I will bring turkeys on my table that it will please me amazingly to see them spoil. Here's the great difference between us,—I put my turkeys on the table to be spoiled, they put theirs under their feet for the same purpose, and to be considered genteel. I say, I feel delighted to see my friends at this season, and I'll make them all as happy as princes if I can, once in their lives anyhow. I am not afraid of their spoiling my carpets ; I should think, not indeed ! This comes of the farmers catching that cursed complaint called gentility."

“Yes, brother,” returned Miss Rachel, “all you say is very true. I am sorry myself to see the old-fashioned, substantial ways going out, and the miserable, thin, genteel ones coming in ; I like to keep feast in a proper manner, if possible. But oh ! the servants, the servants—that is the maid-servants ! I am afraid that Molly and Betty will be very poor assistance, for the servants are not what they were, brother ; they are getting into the highly genteel too, and if we change, why then worse will follow. I tell you, brother, they don’t know one-half what their grandmothers did, in these enlightened times ; ask them if they can wash ; law bless me, they stare as if they never heard of such a cleansing process, and if they do know anything respecting it, they will inform you that at the last place the missus put all the washing out. Ask them if they can bake, and they appear still more ignorant ; and as to brewing, milking, and feeding pigs,—I should never think of putting such questions. So, brother, with the kind of help we get now, I think it is no wonder that feast can’t be kept in the old style, but I think the great evil is that there are too many mistresses ; for now, no sooner does a young woman get married, than she taxes herself and husband with two or three of them at least, although she does not know how to manage one of the class.

You are no doubt getting tired of what I am saying, brother," continued Miss Rachel, observing her brother getting restless ; "but I know there is truth in it ; and as to dress, laws to be sure, it's nothing but dress, there is no end to the waste and extravagance ; the mistresses commence it, and the servants like it, nothing goes down now but hoops, heels, and hats ; it is downright wickedness. Why, do you know, brother, that the other day I was so taken in, I thought I was walking behind a beautiful, elegant, young lady, her dress and mincing walk led me into the error ; but oh, dear me ! when I saw her face she was quite a wrinkled old woman. Oh, dear ! it does vex me so to see those who ought to be the leaders being led by the follies and vanities the young ones are up to. Talk about the taxes, the expenses of the poor, of religion ; why what are they, compared with the taxes pride and conceit bring upon folks ? Who is found giving a tenth of all he possesses to the good and charitable causes ? No, this can't be done, for the other has become too imposing."

"Well, well, Rachel," commenced the farmer, "they must do as they be a-minded, I suppose ; but to my mind, we are going on much like the Jews in the time of the prophet, and for like sins I fear sometimes we shall have like punishment, a mighty deal of humbling."

It was in autumn the usual village feast was kept, and delightful as that season of the year generally is, it was more than usually so at this time; a bountiful and rich harvest had been gathered in, the crops were large and full, gladness pervaded all classes of the rural population, many were truly grateful to the great universal Father for these his benefits, and felt constrained to say with David of old, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Now, all are alike recipients of these natural bounties: the rain rains, and the sun shines on the evil as well as the good, the just as well as the unjust; here is no apparent distinction, the thoughtless and unthankful frequently flourish like the green bay-tree, but still it must be remembered, were all alike indifferent, this constitution of things could not exist. This was proved in the days of Noah and Lot; there was not sufficient salt to preserve the world and its inhabitants. Remember, ye gay and thoughtless, skipping butterfly-like over this terrestrial sphere, that ye have to thank the humble thankful few, that ye have *terra firma* at this moment to stand upon.

But it was autumn when the village festival took place. The sun had been daily lessening his altitude, the rays, as they pierced downwards

became still more and more slanting in direction, and after setting in the western horizon, cool and refreshing breezes swept over the landscape, when suddenly the harvest moon took up the night watch in all her autumnal refulgence, inspiring the traveller with feelings similar to the young poet's when he breaks forth—

“ Moon of harvest, I do love
O'er the upland hills to rove.”

The peasantry—men, women, and children—were busily engaged in getting up that principal root for winter's sustenance, the potato; the turnips and mangolds had rapidly increased in rotundity, and threatened by their bulk to render it anything but agreeable for their next neighbour, but at the same time promising a good supply of nourishment for the sheep and cattle during the winter months; the rooks too, ever active, were majestically following the plough, and minutely scrutinizing every parallel, ever and anon bringing forth from its hiding-place the reluctant caterpillar or chrysalis, deposited there in order to hybernate, and come forth again in the spring in multiple ratio; and on the thatch of the newly-formed wheat-stack and roof of the adjacent barn, making their accustomed parades preparatory to their departure for other lands, the swallows could be seen. No

doubt they understand each other, dumb though we call them, and they are so indeed to us, yet doubtless they possess a language known to themselves, and perfectly comprehensible one to another ; there they were, about to obey one universal law of nature. Their insect food diminishing as the cold advances, they seek the same under softer skies and in fairer climes, and by so doing, keep down the mighty army of insects, which in time would become obnoxious and destructive. We thank you, pretty emigrants, for these your annual visits ; we owe you much ; you take nothing.

All nature, indeed, proclaimed in loud accents the autumn of our year. One little prominent characteristic of the season must not be forgotten,—with autumn too the robin comes. There he could be seen perched on the topmost branch of that lofty fir, giving his accustomed quick and active salaam ; after which break forth in rich and mellow strains, as if his little heart would burst with gratitude and praise, and so continued, provoking into song another brother on the opposite tree. Welcome to our windows, our only autumn songster ! we greet thy return from thy summer retreats as the enlivener of dull winter.

The trees and other plants likewise proclaimed

autumn's reign. How quiet and still is autumn ! all vegetation seems falling to sleep, and the winds appear careful not to disturb their slumbers. Ever and anon a leaf comes trickling down, no more required to clothe the boughs, but now to assist in protecting the roots, where the life-blood is deposited, until the heat of the sun shall again call it forth to life and circulation, producing leaf and fruit as it flows through the arteries of the great trunk. But others again, as the evergreens, are independent of this state of somnambulism, possessing a spirit in their constitutions which renders them impervious to cold. Great God ! how wonderful are all thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all !

CHAPTER XI.

“I have seen them one by one,—
Every shore beneath the sun ;
And my voyage now is done.”

Montgomery.

“I SAY, Rachie,” commenced Farmer Brunt, “I suppose feast will begin to-morrow. I don’t know whether our nephew Tom will be here or not ; no doubt if the young dog’s in England he’ll find his way to Old Farm ; it is two years this feast since he paid us a similar visit. I don’t know that he ever missed a feast before ; but he has been away, they tell me, up in Blueland, or Greenland, or some such outlandish part of the world, and the other day I heard that he was on his way home from the Indies,—but our nephew is a movable article, changes his spots pretty often, I fancy. Our brother is a little to blame with respect to Tom, Rachie ; you know he gave

him a good edecation, and thought to make an M.D. of him. Our brother allis had a little of that about him ; he allis respected a person with a handle to his name, but by hook or by crook Tom gave them the slip before he knew much about the profession, I fancy, and went surgeon on board a whaler bound for the Polar regions. Everybody thought, after that, that he would have had enough of salt water ; not he, for since then he suddenly left again, and now, as I said just now, is on his voyage home from the Indies. Well, it is a good job for him that his friends were born before him. But I like the boy, for all his fast ways ; he's as good-tempered a fellow as ever breathed ; up to everything, and as active as a bee, only he'll never make any honey, I reckon. I should amazingly like to see him at the feast to-year ; he is such a queer dog, he keeps all the young uns alive, and the old uns can't help grinning a little at his comic words. But bother to his jawcrack words, they make me look of all the world like a fool ; I can't think where he picks them up ; then he will wear that what-de-call-it—" 'staches." I hardly like to walk we'n, for in my mind he looks of all the world like one of the Lon'on swells. Then if we meet the Squire or the pa'son, he speaks to them in such a high-fly manner ; and then, by

gore, I can hardly contain myself as he walks into them so about the weather and the crops; and yet the young rogue cares for neither, I know, for he never comes into the country but when there is fun to be had, the young dog. I only hope he'll find his way to Old Farm tomorrow; and, I say again, if England holds him he'll be here; he'll come and see his old nunkey, as he calls me."

The farmer, as he spoke, crossed the room, and looked through the window, and, as he did so, shouted in excitement,

"By Jove, Rachel, and there he is, as I am a living sinner. My eye! and what a rum figure he cuts to be sure, as thin as a Jarman flute, and always will be, unless he gets quieter. What? a jack-tar's hat on his head, and a soldier's knapsack on his back! And that's my nephew! Yes; now that just suits him to a turn. See how the young rogue waves his hat; and hear him shouting 'Boat ahoy! boat ahoy!' 'Tis he! 'tis he! I knew it was; never before did I see such a spring-heeled-Jack in my life. Molly, quick!" called the farmer; "run and open the gate for that gentleman!"

"What! for that tramp, master?"

"Go, go, and don't stand parlying there."

"What! for that soldier, sailor man? Laws

now, Molly don't like soldiers nohow, their coats be the colour of blood, and frighten me terribly."

"Let him in, I tell you ; I know him, and so will you, I guess, presently."

"Hollo, hollo here ! Boat ahoy ! boat ahoy ! Open gates ! Down ports !" continued Tom. "Hollo, Molly ! my prime little maid, as bright as a lobster just boiled, and getting younger every day. Tell me, is Captain Brunt, of the good ship Old Farm, at home ?"

"Laws now, if it isn't Master Thomas, that 'tis to be sure ; sure how yellor you be grown, as yellor as master's corn to-year. I shouldn't have known you, Master Thomas ; that I shouldn't now, if you hadn't spoke."

"Well, old girl, how are aunty and nunkey, the cats and the kittens, and the whole of you, eh ?"

"Come in, Master Thomas ; come in, and welcome to the feast," said Molly.

"Thank you, thank you, my little charmer," replied Tom.

"Well, nunkey," commenced Tom, having entered, "and how do you do?" giving the farmer's hand a hearty press ; "and how are aunty and the family, all well I hope, from the roots to the branches ; master and servant, all in good health and spirits I trust ? Here I am, you see, nun-

key, returned once more to Old Farm, sound wind and limb, timbers bright and tight. I thought, by the bye, that you would not be able to do without me on this festive occasion, so, in the multiplicity of my engagements, I have thrown all overboard, and am come to do myself the great pleasure of meeting you on this very auspicious occurrence. I always endeavour, my honoured nunkey, if possible, to meet you on these exciting, exhilarating opportunities."

"Bravo! bravo! Hurrah, hurrah, boy! hurrah! shouted the farmer. "I feel young again, that I do now. Welcome, boy, welcome to Old Farm!" at the same time shaking his nephew's hand in a most determined manner.

"You see, nunkey," resumed Tom again; "you see I have been going up and down in the wide world, like a certain gentleman is reported to do, —better read of however than known more intimately,—constantly changing my spots, seldom coming to an anchor, but going on and on. And how do you do, dear aunty?" said Tom, now that that lady made her appearance; "does me good to see the ladies; didn't see any all the way from the East Indies. Can't do without them, nunkey; life would not be worth living were they always absent. Dear merry, cherry, active, lively creatures, in the absence of whom the world would

be a complete blank, chaos, confusion ; and existence a dreary beginning with a melancholy end."

"Stop! you good-for-nothing boy," said his aunt ; "how can you go on so?"

"Can't help it, aunty ; can't help it," replied Tom ; "truth will bear it. Can't be too fluent on a subject ; it must come out."

"Tom, my boy," said the farmer again ; "I am glad to see you ; welcome, I say welcome again to our annual feast."

"Thank you, dear nunkey, thank you," commenced Tom, "for this deep expression of sentiment in your hearty invitation. I feel inexpressibly delighted, and rejoice at having this opportunity of reciprocating our mutual relationships and attachments ; and, and, I would go on, but for the exceeding dryness in my throat, caused by fatigue and the dust of travelling."

"Stop, stop, you rogue. I see, I see," said the farmer, giving Tom a slap on the shoulder ; "bring a glass of cherry-brandy—a glass of cherry-brandy. What am I thinking of, I wonder, that I should forget so?"

"All right, all right, nunkey," said Tom, taking the glass, and repeating—

"From distant lands and seas I come
To join the feast at Farmer Brun's ;
Welcome, all ye light and gay,
And keep the general holiday."

"Good, good ; bravo, bravo ! it's Tom again," said the farmer ; "now 'tis," giving him another slap on the shoulder.

"My nunkey will excuse my taking the poet's licence in our ancient name in the toast just given," said Tom. "Now, nunkey, here's to you and aunty, and all friends, present and absent, I was going to say ; may you always live to keep these annual feasts in this prince-like style, and invite wild Tom Brunt to them !"

"You young dog," said the farmer ; "you know you have a free ticket of admittance at Old Farm."

"My dear nunkey," replied Tom again, "I feel the greatest gratification, satisfaction, and elevation, by these deep expressions and demonstrations of regard from my highly honoured father's brother. The sentiments are those I shall ever esteem, cherish, and appreciate, and which the rude hand of time will never deface, as long as memory holds a place in this bosom," and Tom struck his chest.

"Hold, hold, you rogue !" cried the farmer. "Tom, my boy," said his uncle again, "I thought you had enough of sea when you went fishing up in Greenland, and caught that enormous sprat."

"Now nunkey, don't be too hard on a fellow. I didn't go fishing, I went whaling,—two engagements precisely different. A whale, in the

scientific sense of the word, is not a fish ; and the enterprise and daring necessary in order to capture this monarch of the deep should never be stigmatized by that simple definition ; but more of this on another occasion. You know, nunkey, as I said before, I like to change my spots ; I am a restless sort of fellow ; I like to see the world. I know the old adage ' A rolling stone gathers no moss,' but it becomes more smooth and polished. Look at the pebbles on the seashore ; see how round and smooth they appear, although at one time angular, misshapen pieces of flint or granite. This change was produced by rolling in the wide ocean. So man, rolling in the mighty ocean of life, tossed to and fro by the eccentric waves of the world, loses his rough edges, gains a polish. I have seen and mingled with many varieties of the human family, who differ as much in manners and customs as they do in physical appearance. I have seen men by whom the blubber of the whale is considered a dainty dish. Others, on the contrary, whose food consists of simple rice, seldom tasting animal food. I have been in countries where brandy would freeze in a few hours, and others where snow and ice would be the greatest novelties. I have sailed through the three great oceans, and visited three conti-

nents of the world. It is true, when whaling I tired of the employment. The life became dull and monotonous; I like action, change, going on. Whaling is necessarily too stationary an employment for me. You and I, nunkey, differ in this respect; you resemble yon solitary oak in the middle of Ten Acres. I remember that tree when a little boy,—the earliest thing almost I can remember; it has never moved nor changed its place, since an acorn small it was, perhaps by chance dropped into the spot where still it stands, a sturdy, handsome, plethoric tree. You, nunkey, have been on this farm ever since my birth, and long anterior to that event. The tree drew its nourishment and sustenance from the surrounding land until it expanded and developed itself to what we see it now—a giant oak. You, like that tree, nunkey, have been rooted to one spot, from which you have derived nourishment, from these grateful fields, these rich, broad acres. Proofs are plenty; yon bulky, bulging-stomached ricks; these parting, fat, over-burdened sheep and oxen; yourself, nunkey, in constitution resembling the heart of oak. On the contrary, I, swallow-like, change my abode, so from place to place, and clime to clime, to catch my little fly; like them, I am light and thin, and miserably attenuated. But stop, this is

a time of fun and frolic ; but I think since I was wrecked off the coast of Malabar I have grown sentimental."

"What, shipwrecked !" said the farmer.

"Yes, shipwrecked," replied his nephew.

CHAPTER XII.

“The wily quarry shunn’d the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock.”

Scott.

“WITH your leave, nunkey,” commenced Mr. Tom Brunt, “I will take a short stroll through your dominions, and see whatever is to be seen; and you, I know, nunkey, will lend me a shooting-stick and retriever, in order to beguile the lonely hours.”

“Tom, my boy, you are welcome to everything the house affords,” replied his uncle; at the same time reaching down from the beam over the fireplace his well-polished double-barrelled fowling-piece, presented the same to his nephew, remarking, as he did so, “Load well, point straight, and that’s the gun that will bring them down, I’ll lay a trifle;” and in a few moments our sportsman was crossing the fields, gun on shoulder, followed by

the ever-ready sheep-dog Shepherd, who, although kept and trained for the protection and folding of sheep, was as fond of the gun as his master, and could perform the office of retriever in a clever and most efficient manner.

Hundreds of sparrows, finches, and other small birds rose before him from the stubble as he wended his way across the fields, having been busily engaged picking up the scattered grains dropped in the process of housing the shocks; and flocks of starlings, larks, and rooks were wheeling round and round over the adjoining meadows, occasionally alighting for a few moments on a chosen spot, but speedily rising again on the first appearance of the distant enemy.

But Mr. Thomas Brunt had been accustomed to more exciting sport than these harmless bipeds could afford him. He had hunted the royal Bengal tiger in India, and the white bear in the polar regions; the death, therefore, of a sparrow or lark was to him a miserable conquest. So, stalking onward from field to field, and meadow to meadow, ever and anon pointing the gun, but refraining to fire at anything that rose belonging the class Aves; when presently Shepherd nosed something in the hedge, which, on breaking cover at a most terrified speed, proved to be a hare; on seeing which, Tom, in the excitement

of the moment, without properly considering whether he possessed the necessary qualifying document termed a "certificate," fired at the timid quarry, which happily resulted in merely making the little fugitive increase its speed still more, the shot having taken no signal effect.

"Well, Shepherd," said Tom, looking down at his dumb companion, "I have missed it this time, and no mistake; and you, old fellow, are cheated of the paunch; but we must hope for better luck next time," and so commenced re-loading, remarking at the same time, "I have been so long accustomed to rifle and ball, the fowling-piece comes rather strange, I suppose."

When suddenly commenced a voice, "Holla, there, mister! and a precious good job for you that you did miss'n. What did you fire at that there hare for, eh? Answer me that. I just sid you miss that there hare now, I did; and a precious good job, I say again, for you that you did miss'n, for I'll be bound now, and lay a farthing to a crown, that you can't show me a stifcate for carrying that there gun. It's all very fine, I guess, for Farmer Brunt to allow folks to run all over the country shooting at everything they can see; but I fancy me lord will have a bone to pick we'n on this job, and with you too, I reckon, or my name isn't Lurch."

This speech was delivered from the other side the hedge,—the hedge which separated the nobleman's field from that of Farmer Brunt's, at a point much trodden down by persons in the habit of crossing from one property to the other, and by a man dressed in the usual keeper's garb of velveteen coat and corduroy smallclothes, and who had with him gun and ferrets, and who was likewise followed by a little thorough-bred Scotch terrier.

On the first assault from the other side of the hedge, our sportsman, having considered himself far away from any human being or dwelling, felt, for the moment, a little taken aback ; but speedily recovering himself, commenced placing himself in a cool attitude of defiance, and answered the attack as follows :—

“ Well, my man, and pray who may you be, belching forth your vulgarisms in this ignorant and uncalled manner ? Pray who may you be breaking in upon my sporting hours in this domineering and unwarranted mode of address ? Am I right in presuming that you belong to that herd of retainers called ‘ keepers of game ’ ? ”

“ I,” said the man, “ am keeper to Lord Hunting ; whose duty it is to bring before their betters any persons I catch shooting on or near me lord's estates without having the proper leave and licence.”

"Yes, ah, yes; I thought as much," replied Tom; "I thought you were that too often necessary evil termed 'a servant,' by the manner in which you dared on this occasion to address your superior. Here, then," continued he, taking a card from his pocket-book, "present this to your noble master, with my compliments."

The keeper appeared thunderstruck at this piece of unexpected assurance and demand.

"Beg pardon, Sir; beg pardon, Sir," said he, making a low bow; "I didn't know, I didn't know."

"No, not at all, never mind, never mind," replied Tom, at the same time moving his hand with a commanding air; "see that you safely deliver my card, that is all;" so left the keeper to his thoughts and reflections, scrutinizing the card, much like the South Sea Islander, the speaking chip (as he termed it); but presently recollecting himself, whistled his terrier, took up his gun and ferrets, and went on his way, when, having advanced a few steps, stopped, drew forth the card from his pocket, turned it over and over, again remarking, as he did so, "A gemmen, no doubt; none but gemmen keep these here things, and he tells me to give it to my lord. Does he think me fool enough for that, I wonder? Why, if I were to go up to my lord, and give'n this here

bit of card, he would think me an ass outright. I knows my lord would; and perhaps the gemmen knows my lord, and I have been a lee-tle too fast like, and I shall get into a pretty thick cover. I wish the card was on my fire up in Hollywood. No, mythinks I'll let it pass off; there ain't much writ on the card, but it terrifies me amazingly. I hates black and white; yet the gemmen says he has no stificate,—a trap of me lord's, I'll lay a trifle, to catch his cunning keeper off his guard. No! I got it; I'll do my duty,—that'll stick fast longest. I'll keep the card a little while, and get round to Farmer Brunt's. Maybe I shall learn something about the owner, and then we must hav'n up at quarter sessions to show cause why, and the rest on't."

"Now," said Tom, as he passed on in the opposite direction to that of the keeper, "my native land is a fine country, delightful in landscapes, rich in fields and pasture, a pleasing diversity of hill and dale, well-wooded parks, bountiful and ever-running rivers, and the climate healthy and invigorating, and destitute of that enervating and relaxing principle experienced in the far-off East. Yes, I can truly say,—

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still, my country."

But still there is a want of freedom; there is too much of man's restraint for me to remain in the

old country again ; I want to breathe more freely ; the wide ocean is free ; the far North is free ; the East curtails not so much the liberty of her sons ; but home we come, to find by restraint that we are in England. In some respects, too, the poet's words are applicable here as in Greece, where he says,—

“ ‘Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine.’

Yes, that is true ; in some respects all appears divine except that which is really so, the spirit of man. We can excuse the poet a little for this licence and latitude, considering that perhaps he drew his conclusions from an exterior view ; for how difficult it would be to spell out divinity in the face of our friend the keeper just now ; yet we must not doubt the fact.”

Tom was marching on in this musing manner, when Shepherd had, as he considered, the good fortune to start another hare, and coming to his master, looked imploringly in his face, inviting him to fire. “Down ! down ! Shepherd,” said Tom. “No, my dumb friend, you must restrain your sporting propensities as well as myself. You are in England, Shepherd ; and if you are not careful, your life will go to pay the forfeit. You, as many of your race have, will become a martyr to England's laws in this respect. No,

we must find more innocent objects. I should like to be the leader of a crusade against such a system.

"Well, I dare say now,—and it seems highly probable,—that this creature of another will bring me before my betters, as he terms them. It will be some satisfaction in having an opportunity of seeing such at any rate;" and Mr. Thomas Brunt threw his gun over his shoulder, called old Shepherd, and made for the farmhouse.

"Rachie," commenced Farmer Brunt to his sister, after Tom had left for the sporting ramble, "mythinks Tom is as active as ever; but he seems to me like a ship with broad-spreading sails constantly propelling him forward and forward, never letting him come to rest or anchor. Now, in my opinion Tom wants fixing. Could we only get him to stop at one place, I know he could manage anything and everything. I tell ye what, Rachie, I have been thinking, could we only get a nice little anchor for him in the shape of a pretty pair of blue eyes, and all that, Rachie! eh, Rachie? Mythinks he would settle down, and become amazingly useful to his father and me. Bother to the on-and-on fashion he's got into; here to-day and off to-morrow, and then nothing more of him for twelve months. I reckon that one day he'll go beyond come-back; in fact, I

know he will, living with Indians, savages, and I was going to say devils of that sort ! What more can be expected ? Or maybe some epidemic will take hold of him ; then, good bye to seeing Tom again.

“ Why, it is downright mad, Rachie ; I don’t know what my brother can be thinking of. Here he and I are getting two precious old fogies, if he did but know it. I sha’n’t be able to tramp about my barn and stable for ever, and brother will soon be unfit for the counting-house ; and yet here is the only one of our name, the only heir to his and mine, living this scamping, vagabond life.

“ I tell ye what, Rachie, I should like to see him fall over head and ears in love with Miss Vine, our doctor’s niece, I should now ; a nice young girl she seems to me ; allis at church, attending to our pa’son’s first-rate sermons, which I know will do anybody good that attends to them. Mr. Clearview’s sermons are of the right sort, Rachie, depend upon it they are. I hope you and I, and all who hear them, will take care to get the right thing out of them.

“ Tom shall hear them, too, next Sunda’. I dare say he will call him a Methodist though ; but never mind ; it is time to have a new method when the old ones get so plaguy fusty. So much tomfoolery, and so little of God and Christ

going on nowadays, who knows, Rachie, but that Mr. Clearview's sermons may do Tom good? We all know that he goes to the right granary for his corn; and we know that if we sow good seed in spring, we expect a good harvest in autumn. I only wish a corn or two would drop right into Tom's heart. There is good ground there yet, I know, if we could only get the seed into it; but I am gone from what I intended to say. Now, Miss Vine is a bit of a particular of mine; so kind and attentive to her uncle and aunt, and in my eye she is the most genteel young lady in the whole parish. Tom, you know, sister, will be well off; his friends were born before him; his father will leave him all his; and here's the farm. I should like him to settle and live here, and help to manage that which one day will be his own."

Miss Rachel had been sitting in a very restless manner, listening to her brother's long address respecting the future of her nephew, Mr. Thomas Brunt, but her patience at last gave way under the pressure, when she commenced, "Dear me, to be sure, I beg your pardon, brother, for interrupting you, but I must see after Molly and the bread. Molly," called out Miss Rachel, "I forgot, quite forgot; is it time to draw the bread?"

"Not the loaves, missus, but the cakes are taken out of the oven."

"Right, quite right, Molly; now you were more thoughtful than I gave you credit for."

"Yes, missus," returned Molly, "I tries all I can, but 'tisin't much Molly can remember, Molly's skull is precious thick; things go in at one ear and out at the other, I fancy much like a sieve; shall remember more some day, maybe."

"Well, brother," commenced Miss Rachel again, "I like the idea much, I am sure to be interested in anything respecting our nephew, and it is very likely Miss Vine and her uncle will call in to-morrow, and if so, I will make them as comfortable as possible."

"Do, Rachel, do," returned the farmer, "and in the meantime I will touch Tom up a little on the softer sex; I will try and see whereabout he's ploughing in that respect, I will. Molly, tell Dick to come to me," called the farmer.

"What the fresh chap, master?" inquired Molly.

"Yes, you know;" said the farmer. "Now Dick, hast thee found out the ways of Old Farm?"

"Yes, master," answered that worthy. "I knows all about very well now."

"Well then, as to-morrow the feast begins, be quick and active like; take care of the gentle-

men's horses, clean them well down, give them plenty of good hay ; and straw for beds, and have them ready for the gentlemen in time."

"Molly, bring in the tea," demanded Miss Rachel ; "but law bless me now, Master Thomas has not returned yet ; I hope nothing has happened to him. Brother, are you sure the gun was all right ? I dislike guns so much."

"The gun, Rachel, is all right enough, I know ; but there is one thing I am not entirely easy about," said the farmer. "I forgot to put Tom on his guard with respect to Lurch, the keeper. I know he has been prowling about, sneak as he is, to catch my little bird-keeper ; but he will have to wait some time before he catches him, I reckon ; but Tom will let fly at anything that rises before him ; I forgot to forewarn him, therefore he'll not be forearmed. I hope he won't fire at a hare, that's all, or he will be sure to have him up at quarter sessions, for carrying a gun and shooting without a licence ; and no much matter maybe, being on our own grounds,—but it's a nuisance to be had up before the great ones like that."

"I beg pardon, brother," interrupted Miss Rachel ; "but Molly, Molly, how are the puddings and pies getting on ?"

"First-rate, missus ; mythinks they will be a deal better than last feast," answered the servant."

"That's right, that's right, Molly; keep the puddings well boiling, and covered thoroughly with water, and mind the pies don't burn; see to the dairy, skim the milk, and feed the pigs. Bless me, what a noise they are making, you must be certainly deaf, or you would hear them too; and I wonder now what Betty is about; law dear me, to be sure, hasn't she finished the geese and turkeys yet?"

"Yes, missus," replied Molly, "they be all done, and very fat they be to-year; mythink they'll please the folks amazingly, especially when served up as you can serve them up, Miss Rachel."

"There, go along, go along, and attend to your cooking."

"Laws, missus," commenced Molly again; "mythink we shall miss Sam this feast; he was such a handy chap plucking fowls, carrying dishes, and the likes, allis ready to help a poor soul; poor fellow, I hopes he's better off now."

"Yes, yes," replied the lady; "there now, go and attend to your work. Here, stop a moment, I forgot to ask you what you think of my nephew, Master Thomas?"

"Think of 'n, did you say, Miss Rachel? Law bless you now, Molly can't think at all, no ways, I only stares at 'n; it seems like but the other

day he was but a bit of a boy, but now, laws how folks alter to be sure ! he is a man grown, with beautiful whiskers, and 'staches round his mouth. I wonder all the ladies in the parish don't fall dead in love we'n, mythinks ; and then he is so quick and active like, here, there, and everywhere in a moment,—I only wish our new chap was half as fast ; I can't make much on him carrying dishes and the likes. Sam was a deal quicker. And then Master Thomas has been to the Indies ; a fine country, I fancy, where the great ones go to get rich, and the ladies to get husbands ; but where their faces are blacker than poor old Molly's. Oh laws ! I wonder what Mister Tom thought of the black girls, I am sure they be enough to frighten a Christian right out, they be sure !" And away went Molly to attend to her baking and boiling, laughing all the way at her own ideas and wit.

" Well, Rachel," commenced the farmer, as he entered the house, " I have been round the cow-house and stables ; poor Sam is terribly missed there. The cattle don't seem to have moved much the past week, they must be forced a little, or they won't be of much account at Christmas ; I must see to them myself a little. And now I wonder where our nephew is got to, I hope he won't forget the chatter-water."

The table at this time stood waiting, laden with the usual comfortable farmhouse fare, consisting of sausages, flead cakes, pork, bread, cheese, and butter; in addition to which, a brown jug of home-brewed beer stood at one end, reminding us of the diet of our Saxon forefathers, and which was always considered indispensable at Farmer Brunt's tea-table, as he and his gentlemen friends preferred taking a glass of that beverage as a preparation for the leaf of China. The fire blazed away merrily, before which were stretched at their greatest longitude, and in the most lazy manner, two mousers, who ever and anon turned the colder side to the grateful and soothing heat, and the kettle on the hob was declaring, as plain as possible, and in most superior breadth, that the *aqua pura* was ready for preparing tea.

"Here he comes, here he comes, Rachie," said the farmer, returning from the window; "no game, I fancy."

"Yes, here I am, nunkey," commenced Tom, "returned from harmless sport, only made the feathers fly and the legs run a little faster. So long accustomed to the rifle, nunkey, the fowling-piece comes a little strange to me. I have not been clever enough to take the innocent life of anything; there was, however, a large, rough biped that set up a most vehement crowing on the other

side of the hedge. Had it been in days of yore, it might perhaps have ended in a duel ; however, I knocked him back a little by making him the bearer of my card to his noble master."

"Now that was Lurch, the keeper, I lay a crown," said the farmer. "Didn't see you kill, I suppose?"

"No," replied Tom, "but he saw me fire at a hare, which I was unlucky enough to miss, upon which he came up and desired my certificate ; but of course, not having been provided with such a necessary and precious document, I could not produce the same."

"Yes," said the farmer, after musing some time, "I am glad you did not kill, boy, very glad ; they are dreadfully strict here. Now mark me, we shall hear of it again. No doubt but we shall have to appear at magistrates' meeting on this job."

"Yes, he said he should bring me before my betters," replied Tom, at the same time taking off his shot-belt and powder-flask ; "and as I am anxious to see such, no doubt I shall soon have my curiosity gratified in this respect. They can't do much, you know, nunkey ; a fine will meet, no doubt, the exigencies of the case, as no blood was shed, and I will ground my defence on the fact that the fields were poor nunkey's, and

we shall all live again after that, never fear, my honoured father's brother, and at the feast to-morrow we'll drink success"—

"To great men and small,
Keepers and all;
The best and the worst,
The last and the first.
Hip, hip, hurrah!"

And Tom sent his cap up to the ceiling.

"Bother that fellow, though," said the farmer; "I should have told you of that shark; but never mind, never mind, the chatter-water is waiting, we won't think any more about it at present; and when the row begins, I'll go with you, boy, but sha'n't be able to do much, I reckon."

"Think about it, nunkey? I should say not indeed," said Tom; "we are not going to make the anticipation worse than the realization."

"Well, aunty," commenced Tom, again turning in the direction of that lady, "you have everything looking very nice and comfortable here. This is better than being in a small cabin in the ice, bound north; there are no ladies there, you see, nunkey, and they are the authors of all our domestic comfort."

"Yes, we should like to have everything comfortable," replied Miss Rachel, "if the servants were only better; but they are so deceiving in

their work, and so very uncertain, that it is almost impossible to get on with them."

"Something like the natives of India, eh, aunty?" remarked Tom. "Now, aunty, I think you ought to go to India, to know what servants can be."

"I am sure I am very glad I am not there," said Miss Rachel.

"Well, well, you know I mean to know the character of servants. You would think after such experience, that Europeans of that class were angels indeed. Why, aunty, think of the truth being always an exception, but the reverse the rule. Do you ask what o'clock it is, they will first try to discover the moment you're anxious about, and that is the time they will make it to be. Or, if going from home and the clouds frown upon you, and look as black as thunder, inquire if it will be fine. Yes, master, a glorious day, although the rogues know it will wash you in ten minutes. But we treat the matter as a joke, knowing what to expect beforehand."

"Well, boy," commenced the farmer again, "you find English shooting differ from Greenland fishing?"

"Yes, nunkey, you see there are no keepers there; all's fish that comes to net."

"Many didn't get into my nephew's, I fancy," replied the farmer, with a knowing wink.

“No, nunkey, I didn’t obtain much oil myself, but I gained experience. I learned to be self-reliant, to fall back upon my own resources for recreation and amusement. Two or three years an inmate of an old tub of a whaler, nothing but sea all round, and snow in the distance, with the occasional appearance of a little undersized Esquimaux, enveloped in the skin of a white bear or sea cow—would not suit the man who could not school his mind from change and excitement. No, nunkey, a person who could live three years in the Polar seas, and not commit suicide at the end of the time, would not find any reason for such a disagreeable alternative when settled down on a solitary farm in his own native country. No, there is nothing particularly dull here when you can command your fishing-rod and gun, and enjoy the privilege of using them; then there is much to interest and delight in the production and improvement of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. No, there’s nothing dull at Old Farm, especially when my kind aunty and nunkey are by the fireside.”

“Stop, stop, you rogue,” said the farmer; “here’s your cup of tea getting cold. I am precious glad you see things as you do, boy. There’s hopes of you yet, lad,” giving his nephew a familiar slap on the shoulder. “I am very glad you have had enough of whale fishing.”

“That designation again, nunkey. Now, as I said before, the whale, in the scientific sense of the word, is not a fish at all, but belongs, strictly speaking, to another class of animals ; the whale belongs to the class Mammalia, or Suckgivers. A fish is an animal that breathes under the water, not by lungs, but by gills ; its blood is cold, feelings obtuse, brings forth its young by means of eggs, takes no care in hatching them, nor of the young when hatched. The whale lives in the water, but never breathes under that element, or suffocation would be the result, as it breathes by lungs ; its blood is warm, feeling acute, brings forth its young alive, suckles and takes care of the same until old enough to take care of itself. Often have I seen the whalers capture the young one in order to secure the mother, the love of her offspring being so great that she refuses to leave the spot where she lost sight of it, and in this way becomes herself a prey to the harpooner. It is to this fact, and the knowledge of her being unable to breathe under the water, we owe our success in capturing this monster of the deep, for when the harpooner strikes she sinks, but must soon rise to breathe again, when she receives another harpoon ; down again she goes, but not for long, not having had time to breathe properly before, up she comes again, but receives

another blow before inspiring the vital air; the blood is flowing fast, she makes an effort to sink, but lies floating like a log on the surface; the lance is applied to the vital parts of the body, the blood rushes forth, the sea becomes tinted with it, she bellows, and in the greatest convulsions dies; but frequently in her death-struggles, with one vibration of her tail, sends men, boat, and all into the air. This, nunkey, is whaling."

"Well, Tom, my boy," said the farmer, "I see it differs mightily from what we call fishing; it is a mighty deal more troublesome work than catching eels in our river."

"Please missus," interrupted Molly, "the puddings and pies are done, and the turkeys and geese are dressed; shall I put them into the pantry?"

"Yes; wait a moment, Molly. Bless me now, to be sure there's something broken; go and see what it is. Well, what?"

"Betty, missus," replied Molly, "just knocked a dish off the table."

"Yes, just like her! Oh, the servants, the servants! they are enough to ruin any one, I am sure they are," observed Miss Rachel.

"Never mind, never mind," said the farmer; "accidents will happen; think no more about it. It won't mend the broken plate, nor make a new one, I reckon."

"Here, Molly," commenced Miss Rachel again, "come and take away the tea-things. See you don't drop them; and move a little quicker, or to-morrow, as my brother says, we shall have a fast instead of a feast."

"Now Tom, my boy," said the farmer, "let us draw nearer the fire; the autumn evenings, mythinks, are getting cold."

"With all my heart, nunkey," replied Tom; "and we'll have a little tobacco; I occasionally indulge in the frugal weed," at the same time drawing forth the necessary ammunition and apparatus from his pocket. "Try a cigar, try a cigar, nunkey," said Tom; "they are perfectly mild, and would tempt the most fastidious appetite."

"No, thank you, boy," replied the farmer; "I think perhaps it would make me feel all worse, and no better."

"I wish I could tempt you to become a smoker," said Tom; "it would make the solitary hours pass like a panorama from your vision. Tobacco, nunkey, has its virtues, depend upon it; it is an excellent narcotic, good for bachelors, soldiers, and sailors; it makes up, in some degree, for the society of the softer and more interesting sex. But even now, I think," added Tom, musing, "I think if I could meet with a nice

little Eve, with an exterior that would enamour a Greek artist, brilliant peepers, vermilion lips, clever, patient, of superior mind, with a voice like the nightingale, or like the mellow cooing and wooing of the turtle-dove,—eh, nunkey? eh? I think for such a charmer I could give up watching the curling cloud ; but for nothing less, I am wedded to it at present. Nunkey smiles at the idea, but I believe it is quite necessary to my existence ; in the North Seas I have sat on the side of the ship, wrapped in my sealskin, with no other companion than this pipe, watching the waves chase and chafe each other, thinking of home, old friends, and you, nunkey, and aunty likewise,—I don't forget old friends, you see, nunkey. I have smoked it with the child of the north, and the native of the south and east ; it warms in the cold, and cools in the heat ; I can recommend it, nunkey ; I don't know any clime or circumstances where it might not be used with the desired effect."

"Now Tom, my boy," commenced his uncle, "did you ever feel that soft, what-do-they-call-it 'sentiment,'—a sort of all over, can't-help-it feeling? Tell me that, boy."

CHAPTER XIII.

"These things to hear,
Would Desdemona seriously incline."

Shakespeare.

"NUNKEY," replied Tom, "nunkey," at the same time slowly lighting his pipe, "nunkey, you mean 'love.' Now, I'll tell you what the sailors say; they say a man is not in love until he can walk over the side of the ship, and not be aware of his mistake until he finds himself plunging and struggling in the cold salt water; now, I never did that foolish thing, therefore, according to sailors' logic, I was never in love. But while I smoke this last pipe, I will just give you a little incident, bearing upon the subject, that on one occasion befell me in India. Travelers, nunkey, fetch their experience from afar, so I must direct your attention for a little moment to India—that land of princes, palaces, balls,

music, fashion, life,—the world, nunkey, the world.”

“Land of love and social hours,
Land of birds and pretty flowers,
Land of warm and sunny skies,
Land of soft, but killing eyes,
Land of rich and gaudy state,
Land of everything that’s great.”

“India, nunkey,” continued Tom, “is all that, and more might be added. Now of course I and the officers of the ship were invited to the balls and routs at Calcutta, and there it was I became introduced to a beautiful, rich, and accomplished lady; she could play beautifully, and sing better; her sentimentals, nunkey, were affecting, bewitching, enchanting, fixing, and transfixing; her mind, too, adorned with a European education, was contained in a figure by which the most fastidious Greek artist would have been enamoured. Yes, nunkey, this rich, accomplished beauty smiled—”

“On you, boy? on you, boy?” demanded the farmer.

“On me,” replied Tom. “Yes, this Eastern maiden sighed like as no Western one can sigh; and her eyes softened to tears when I told her of England, her riches, her honours, her noble sons. She would sit for hours, attentively drinking in all I could advance; and when, in her native simplicity, she asked, ‘Do you love me?’ ”

“What did you say, boy? what did you say, boy?” inquired the farmer, deeply interested in the subject.

“What did I say, nunkey? what did I say?” said Tom, and leisurely knocked the dust from his pipe again. “I said nothing; I was dumb.”

“Dumb!” said the farmer.

“Yes, dumb!” returned the nephew; “dumb as old Shepherd.”

“What could have ailed ye, boy? what could have ailed ye? A Brunt dumb in the society of all that was beautiful! why, boy? why?”

“Nunkey,” replied Tom, “I feel I must have another pipe;” which he loaded and lit, and again commenced smoking like a volcano or locomotive, when, quietly taking it again from his mouth, observed, “Why, nunkey, she was ‘black.’”

“Black!” shouted the farmer, and jumped off his seat. “Black! did you say black?”

“Yes, as black as old Jet,” replied Tom.

“Oh, my eye! what a joke,” said the farmer, “if my nephew had presented to us his black wife!”

“Yes, nunkey, it would have been, but never will be,” replied Tom. “Yes,” he continued, musing, “she was black; a blush would never tinge her fine countenance. I enjoyed her music, her cultivated voice; her talent pleased me; but

in all probability I shall never sail to the East again ; my next trip, nunkey, shall be to the far West,—I am longing for this voyage. I will visit the magnificent and free continent of America, where nature glories in the sublime and gigantic ; there, to be seen only to be admired, are the mighty falls of the world-famed Niagara, with its insinuating and subtle rapids ; there, the rivers, endless and everlasting, roll unmolested to the fathomless ocean ; there, the lakes—magnificent inland seas — stretch over hundreds of square miles, and tip ten thousand miles of shore ; there, prairie and pampa glory in their original primitiveness ; and primeval forests, with their sturdy leviathans, lashed together with the parasites of ages, preserve countless game for the wily, undaunted hunter ; there, wild animals by thousands scour the plains, and delight in one general and universal holiday ; herds of wild bulls, bisons, and deer, gallop over hill and dale, and troops of wild horses feed on the plains ; there, the sly jaguar, too, crouches in the fork of the overhanging forest trees, under which the active peccary grunts in coaxing mood to his companions ; the condor soars aloft above the highest Andes, and the painted humming-bird flits from flower to flower, and sucks the nectar of every blossom ; and where, likewise, under

your feet, or coiled round the aged trunk, the boa and rattlesnake are heard and seen. Yes, nunkey," repeated Tom, "I must visit America ; good shooting there, minus keepers ; how I shall enjoy the freedom, nunkey !"

"Tom, my boy," said his uncle, "not if I can help it you won't, I can tell ye. I want you to stay at home now ; your father has plenty, and here is the farm I intend you to have some day. I tell you what, Tom, you must get a wife ; but, mind, not a black one ; and come and settle down with us. Your father and myself are getting in years, and should like you now to stop with us. I must see my brother respecting this business ; it will never do for his only son and my only nephew to go wandering up and down the earth without anybody to care for him ; this isn't the way for a Brunt to live."

"Now, nunkey," commenced Tom, "you know I have had my fling and my freedom, and I like it, and I don't expect ever to be able to submit to that domestic state called matrimony. I see all the bearings of the position at once,—a married man must be fond of home, his fireside, must not study his own inclinations alone, but having brought another to share his fortunes, vicissitudes, and other accidents, she being the weaker, but most susceptible, must be the first consideration. Now,

I have not schooled myself in this way, but have delighted in change. Change of friends, places, and climates; this, you know well, nunkey, has been my failing from a boy; objects have become uninteresting and irksome as they have grown familiar. I, nunkey, like to smile on all alike, without any danger of meeting an overwhelming frown from the opposite of the room, just a little intimation what a fellow must expect when returned to his own hearth or curtains. No, nunkey, you will not, I am sure, admit that I am a fit subject to be bound thus until I can long and sigh for such a 'state of bliss' with the young poet, alas! too young to have been experienced in the matter,—

"If far from me the Fates remove
Domestic peace, connubial love,
The prattling ring, the social cheer,
Affection's voice, affection's tear," etc.

No, nunkey, I tell you I am not a fit subject, until I can give up the whole world and concentrate my affections upon one small atom of creation; women, nunkey, in this matter are selfish and exacting."

"But still, Tom, mythinks," said the farmer, "I should like to see you settle down. You have sid quite enough of the world; I want you to come and live at Old Farm, as I said before, it

must come to you. I have been careful ; there's no rent to pay, no mortgage, the land has been well manured, cleared from weeds, and in first-rate condition for wheat growing. I entered it a tenant, but shall leave you the undisputed owner of that which cost me years of frugality and care to acquire."

"My respected nunkey," said Tom again, "I cannot too highly appreciate and be too fully sensible of your kind solicitude for me, your hair-brained nephew ; but, before giving you anything like a final answer to your very kind and never-to-be-forgotten, but very serious proposals, I must take some little time to weigh, to deliberate on this state, not of perpetual motion ; but, on the contrary, of perpetual quiescence."

Bob now entered the room, having been engaged all day, on the farmer's behalf, disputing the right to the before-mentioned field of potatoes which some hundreds of the Squire's rooks had laid a strong claim to, and who for days, as before remarked, had been swooping down upon the same and again rising high in air beyond reach of shot, each loaded with a large potato, a few of which would have gone far in filling the bushel. This of course gave the farmer much uneasiness.

"Well, my little keeper," commenced the farmer, turning in his chair, "have you been

able to get a shot at any of the black thieves yet ? I am almost sure they'll not leave a tater behind, now they have commenced them. I wish the old Squire would get rid of the cawing pirates, I do ; but he's very good in the parish, folks haven't got much to complain on, as I knows on."

"No," replied Bob, "I haven't shot any, but I have caught two of them."

"Caught two, you say ?" inquired the farmer, again starting in his chair.

"Yes," replied Bob, "and left them hanging in the potatoes, a warning to the rest." But seeing Master Tom with the moustaches fixing his eyes upon him, Bob felt a little shy for a moment, but at last related how he had succeeded in capturing two of the enemy.

"Well done, well done, my little keeper ; you have saved the field now, that you have, for they'll never come again after being taken in in that way ; for they are no fools on the march, but terrible wise customers. There, now," he continued, "go to bed, and dream of the feasts and lots of pudding."

Whether Bob actually dreamed of the feast we cannot say ; he was not much in the habit of spending the time allotted for repose in that way ; for he usually retired for the purpose of sleep and nothing else, as his feathered charge had before

him, and with whom, or earlier if possible, he had to rise on the following morning in order to prevent them breakfasting off Farmer Brunt's wheat.

A feast in the country was considered one of the most exciting seasons in the whole year. Open housekeeping was the rule; the reverse, the exception. Every edible of which England could boast might be found at this time on the farmer's table; but seldom, even then, did he think of going beyond his own neighbourhood for the desired turkey, goose, fowl, or beef, which met together at the annual festival. The drinks, likewise, consisted principally of cider, beer, mead, home-made wine, etc., all of home production, but to which English hospitality all were alike welcome. It was on such festive occasions that the more isolated farmer became conscious of the more advancing members of his calling by whom he was surrounded. It was now the small hard-worked landholder met his more wealthy and easier-going brother of the plough; it was now that the ambitious man, farming his thousand acres, condescended to acknowledge the little holder of eighty or one hundred.

And here I would remark, *en passant*, that the voracious appetite for the acquisition of land in some individuals is not generally the way to wealth; all such obtain, frequently, is merely the

name of farming a thousand acres,—a quantity more than any person can properly manage and render productive, and pay rent, taxes, labour, etc. etc.; it is more than he can properly stock or manure; and as every year finds a farmer becoming richer and richer, or poorer, so he suffers accordingly. Starve your land, and the same will very soon starve you,—is an old saying. One hundred acres, cleaned, manured, and otherwise properly managed, will produce as much as double the quantity only half attended to. Then what a mistake is here committed, with respect not only to the renter himself, but likewise to the public at large, in sacks, bushels, and pounds.

But, as before remarked, all were alike welcome, and really desired at the feast; and not only the neighbouring farmers, but their mechanical friends likewise, as the farrier, wheelwright, etc.,—all were welcome at these annual gatherings to eat and drink at the farmer's expense, and all were happy and merry as could be well imagined. One alone might be seen looking anxious, it was the mistress of the establishment, who, with not unfrequently inferior help, had to prepare, in no limited degree, the viands consumed during the festivities.

A farmer's wife! what does the term imply? not unfrequently a helpmeet indeed. From the day of her marriage she seldom knows little else

than work. She frequently takes the office of housekeeper and self-denial ; as if by her early and late energies her husband was to become enriched, and the desired gold saved. Farmers, as a class, are proverbially fond of money ; their pockets are too often endless chasms, out of which it is impossible to extract the precious metal. They are hospitable and neighbourly, and will, without grudging, give you all the house affords ; but, reader, never ask them for money, I warn ye !

The day having arrived, the visitors would commence dropping in about two o'clock, that being the principal dinner-hour ; but the provisions were left on the table long after this time for stragglers who might yet feel disposed to make a call. Jokes and rustic wit, with conversation bearing upon cows and sows, litters of pigs and teams of horses, tithes and taxes, the prices of hay and corn, etc., which some of the most close and best-to-do always declared, if continued at the present rate, would ruin half the farmers. The younger branches of visitors would, when the evening set in, too, indulge in a few country dances, when top-boots, and those of lighter material, would blend together in friendly proximity. When assembled, however, the visitors presented a rather motley appearance ; many of the young

men and maidens suffering a sort of transition state between the old and new systems of farming, many of whom attempted the more modern, but fashionable, costume,—the young men, for instance, sporting a gold pin in the scarf, and strapped trousers, in the place of small-clothes and gaiters; but who would be occasionally out in judging distance, proved by the ever and anon kick delivered on the leg of some innocent but unfortunate chair or table; and the occasional scream of a lady, whose dress was passing the very disagreeable ordeal of being trodden on by the foot of man, which foot was not unfrequently a measured reality, rendering it no little difficulty to the owner to place it within an inch or two of the exact spot intended. Others, however, were of the old school, and did not even attempt a new coat; and to whom the fantastical young chaps, as they designated them, were very disgusting, for they themselves ignored even the appearance of dress,—considered such very bad policy indeed,—as folks would begin to think “varmers” well-to-do, and the landlords in consequence raise the rent; such things have been known in days gone by, and it was not impossible that the same might occur again. One, a Mr. Cutman, and rather an extraordinary person, both mentally and physically, and of whom it was reported that he always grumbled

at market, and spoke to every one of the badness of the weather, blight, and the probability of a bad harrest, and ruined "varmers;" and of whom it was said that at a certain season of the year he would walk through his grateful cornfields, ungrateful man as he was, and pluck the only ear or two of blighted wheat, and exhibit the same at market as specimens of the whole field. "And thousands more besides," he would say; "the harrest will be far enough below the average to-year, I know it must be;" and all this deceit, low cunning, and falsehood, in order to influence the market in an upward tendency.

Mr. Cutman was no particular friend of Farmer Brunt's, as the farmer frequently expostulated with him on his deceptive propensities; but yet he considered himself a very necessary adjunct at the feast, so always found his way to Old Farm on these open-hearted occasions.

Mr. Thomas Brunt was highly amused, as well as amusing. He was at home with every one; and his urbanity of manners rendered him a general favourite with all, for, in fact, Tom could be at home in any society; soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, countryman, or citizen, learned or illiterate,—all came the same to him. This, as he told his uncle, was what he had obtained by travel. But Farmer Cutman observed, after he had taken a

pint or two of cider, that he thought the young man rather too fast, and he would see, he observed, "if he couldn't take'n down an inch or two;" so, after Tom had been entertaining the company, in his usual free happy manner, with some sketches from his travels and voyages, and just as he had finished telling them that on sailing south the sign of the Cross appeared in the heavens, a beautiful constellation, —Farmer Cutman pushed his neighbour, and, in a very insulting manner, said,

"What does the feller say? Going to make us (hiccough), going to make us varmers believe the moon's made of green cheese(hiccough); here goes at'n. Eh, there, Mr. Tom! You there, as light as a feather and thin as a match, looking of all the world like a Lonnon counter-jumper! Do you mean to tell us varmers that you have weathered the gale? Do you think we be going to believe them there cussed crosses, and the rest on't?"

Which challenge Tom, forgetting his dignity, could not help meeting promptly and decidedly, to the satisfaction of all; who wished that Mr. Cutman knew better behaviour.

On which Mr. Cutman commenced again, "Mr. Tom, I hope no offence—not the slightest grain on't; but 'pon my life now, if I hadn't known you, and sid you about on my farm, I should

have taken you for one of the Lon'on swell-mobsmen."

"Ah, yes, indeed ; and no bad judge either," replied Tom, again. "Really now, you possess more sagacity than I gave you credit for, Mr. Cutman. But, excuse me, Mr. Cutman, when I say a pig is known by his grunt, an ass by braying, and a goose by hissing."

"That's a good un," said the farmers ; "bravo, Mr. Tom ; serves him right ; how do you feel, Cutman ?"

"I hope you're not right off, Mr. Tom," said Cutman.

"Not at all, not at all," replied Tom ; "only one joke deserves another. We deal in nothing else, you know, Mr. Cutman, at these festive occasions."

At supper-time some of the young gentlemen were guilty of indulging in that very low species of wit, viz. puns on names, as, "Miss Hogg, shall I assist you to a little pork ? Miss Vine, will you accept a little wine ?" etc.,—all very amusing to some of the party, but not the less annoying to the young ladies, who, of course, could not help pronouncing such specimens of wit vulgar and stupid in the extreme.

"Really," said Mr. Cutman, "if I was you, Mr. Tom, I wouldn't let Miss Vine go by that cognomen long, that I wouldn't."

"I wish I wasn't married," said a second.

"I'll be shot if she shouldn't have the honour of being Mrs. Smith before long. She shall be my second," said another.

Miss Vine said nothing; but blushed, and wished she had not accepted the farmer's kind invitation.

"Friends," commenced Farmer Brunt, "we can be merry and wise. I hope no one will be guilty of hurting the feelings of any one of the friends who has done me the honour and kindness to visit me at this season, and to whom I feel obliged and indebted. I know, friends, that you don't wish to wound the feelings of any one present; but it will be better to drop all personal remarks, altogether, for I am sure I feel obliged to you all for coming here to-day, and my great desire is that all shall be happy, wise, and comfortable."

"Yes," answered Cutman again, "that's it, Brunt; you and I know each other very well, we weren't born yesterday. Mr. Tom thinks, I s'pose, that because he has been to the Indies and about a bit, that we varmers must give best to'n; but we can let him know that we have been born too near a wood to be frightened by an owl."

"Yes," replied Tom again, "I could easily give

you credit for that, Mr. Cutman. I should have supposed you had not only been born near one, but really in the middle, not only of a wood, but a huge forest, cut off from civilization. But it is easily accounted for; you have taken, I see, Mr. Cutman, a glass or so of strong ale or cider, which has been too much for your weak brains, and which has rendered fluent your ignorant tongue."

"Tom, my boy," said his uncle, "in the multitude of words there is sometimes much evil; say no more, he has perhaps taken a sup or two too much on this festive occasion, but he does not mean anything."

"Don't I though, by gore?" roared Cutman. "I say there's not a lady in the parish but is glad to see me, a precious deal more than a bird of passage, a swaller like you,—there, that's flat, Mr. Tom!"

"The ladies in your parish must be distressed, indeed," said Tom, "before they would submit to a thing like you."

"Yes, and they would be more distressed if they couldn't see a better slip of a man than you, with your cussed 'staches,—the ladies love the varmers. Why the varmers are quiet, harmless cretturs, allis at home, never gadding abroad over land and sea."

"Friends," commenced Farmer Brunt, taking

up his glass, "here's to present and absent friends, especially my nephew, whom I am most happy to welcome, and introduce to you this night. I am happy to see you, I say, boy, and here's to you and all friends."

"Nunkey," said Tom, "I see you wish me to say something by way of thanks, but, like Othello, I am slow in that way, and when I rise for the purpose, always feel myself; but will just remark, that I much appreciate the honour conferred upon me in drinking my health in this hearty manner, and wherever situated, under whatever clime, or amongst whatever people, will remember with great and deep affection, the friends I met at Old Farm. Gentlemen, I have much pleasure in proposing the health of my uncle; may he live long to conduct these annual festivities, and sing his annual songs!"

After the toast, the farmer gave his usual sentimentals, as 'The Brave Old Oak,' 'Woodman Spare that Tree,' etc. When Mr. Tom followed with 'Oh, I should like to Marry,' etc., followed by several comics, with a few real black songs, to the no small delight of Molly and her mates of the kitchen; after which, Mr. Tom entertained the company with illustrations of native dances of the different nations and tribes with whom he had been living in various parts of the world.

Roars of laughter followed the various illustrations, at which our hero became so excited and warm that he found it necessary to relieve himself of his coat, on which his feet went quicker than ever, and the laughter increased tenfold ; but one or two of the ladies were observed to blush a little.

“ Mythinks,” said the farmer, after observing Tom’s wonderful agility, “ mythinks Tom has got a rent in arrear, as Buxton, or some one has it ;” but which little misfortune Tom never discovered until he retired for the night ; when it appeared that the exertion of dancing had occasioned an unfortunate rent in his nether garments, which little episode helped to create the roars of merriment ; and which incident, some of the farmers remarked, they should not forget till their dying day. Another source of amusement was some practical jokes played off by the ladies, more especially on Mr. Cutman, who had fallen to sleep and snoring duets with the singers, when one of the young ladies having blacked his hand, tickled his nose with a feather, which, in a half-sleeping mood, Mr. Cutman rubbed on his face, in order to allay the irritation produced by the pinion ; this produced another volley of merriment, as they contemplated Cutman’s black physiognomy. Blind man’s buff, and other games, followed in rapid succession, and at twelve o’clock, the excitement appeared to be gaining its highest pitch.

“Well, well,” said Molly, as she returned to her friends in the kitchen, “this has been a good feast to-day, anyhow. My, didn’t Master Tom sing the black songs, and dance them dances! How his fit went to be sure, faster than any fit I ever sid in my born days! And my, didn’t the ladies laugh! I thought they would have bust, sure I did now; Master Tom is so mighty comical in the black songs. I thought I should have unlocked my jaws, I did now; if I had stopped in the room the smallest bit longer, I know I should, and no mistake. Laws, how I laughed! I don’t think I opened half so much last feast. To hear how he answered Master Cutman! Now that sarved him just right; what did he want to be going on with Master Tom for in that stupid way? And the young ladies, too, what spirity things they be, to be sure! Laws, what a black face they gid him, and how I laughed and grinned when I saw him rub the black on his nose!”

“Yes,” said Miss Rachel entering the kitchen, “Mr. Cutman is too fond of the intoxicating draught. That is the evil which makes him and all men forget themselves. When the drink is in, you know, Molly, the wit is out. Mr. Cutman is generally a peaceable man. But I shall be very glad when the week is over. I feel it is too much for me; my head is constantly aching.”

"Laws now, does it?" said Molly. "Poor soul, I be sorry for that! Now you go to bed, Miss Rachel. Leave all to me; I'll put away all the things, as well as I can remember, like yourself nearly."

"You are very kind, Molly; but I feel that I am getting really tired of these times; my nerves won't stand the excitement. There was a time when all went off easy enough with me; but that time has gone, gone, Molly, gone, and I shall never see it again. I am getting perhaps a little too old for these entertainments."

"Laws, missus, don't say that," said Molly; "you are getting noways old yet."

"Well, perhaps not," returned her mistress. "But if not old, I feel as if I were so."

"You shall go to bed," said Molly. "Caught a little cold maybe. I'll make a little gruel for you. You have worked too hard perhaps."

"Yes, Molly," replied Miss Rachel, "without sufficient assistance. My brother's kind, but has no idea of the work it makes me, or he would never care about these times. How fatigued I feel, to be sure!" So saying, Miss Rachel retired; Molly promising to see all locked up, and the keys taken up to her mistress.

After the company had left, Tom and his uncle sat by the fire for a few moments, Tom smoking

his pipe as usual, and talking over the first day of the feast, just past.

"I like them to enjoy themselves," said the farmer; "but there allis will be some that will make themselves disagreeable. I was sorry Cutman went on so. You see Miss Vine and her companions left early."

"Yes," replied Tom, "and I am glad they did, so as to escape hearing that fellow's vulgarisms."

"Yes," returned the farmer; "Miss Vine is a lady of mind, and doesn't like that free, off-hand manner. I know it, and feel it myself, that there isn't a more ignorant class than farmers generally; yet I can't see the reason it should be so. If they would be only half as industrious in cultivating their minds as they are their fields; and they have plenty of time for it, in the winter's evenings. But so it is with us all; we have as a class neglected our minds."

The farmer whistled old Shepherd, and called for the lantern, in order to proceed round the premises before retiring. This was the farmer's usual custom, winter and summer, in order to discover if any one was unlawfully lurking about the ricks or barns; likewise to satisfy himself that the horses and cattle were properly tied up and cared for. Unless he did so, he observed, he could

not sleep a wink ; and if by chance sleep overcame him, he dreamed of ricks on fire, horses and cattle struggling in their head-chains, until he was glad to get up. Shepherd, too, always accompanied his master in his nocturnal rounds, that his nose might be of service in detecting any hidden burglar, should one dare to secrete himself.

As Mr. Thomas Brunt retired to his bedroom, thinking over the exciting scenes of the day, he discovered, for the first time, as before remarked, the unfortunate rent in his nether garments. The ridiculous figure he must have cut, and exhibited in the presence too of those to whom he would much rather have appeared in a far different light, annoyed him exceedingly ; especially when he called to remembrance the vehement laughter occasioned, as he supposed, by his clever illustrations of the various native dances. But, like most of us under similar trying circumstances, he had one source of consolation, and that was when he remembered that one, and the most particular individual, was absent at the time. So throwing off his coat, and giving encouragement to this kind and relieving consideration, jumped into bed ; and a very uneasy bed it proved to be, for no sooner had his legs gained their greatest longitude, than they were attacked by, or ran

against, as he supposed, a bundle of thorns, the pricking of which, and in opposition to his will, compelled him to utter words not unfrequently used at sea; so drawing up, and collecting his limbs as close as possible, like the tortured hedgehog, rolled out in this position on the floor. When, on examining the bed, he found, not thorns, but some of the most stubborn slips of the holly-tree, deposited by whom, and for what purpose, was not difficult to conjecture, when remembering the practical jokes played off on the sleeping farmer the previous evening.

“The little culprits!” ejaculated Tom, as he contemplated his understandings, spotted over with the life of man, peering out from a hundred lancet holes; “the little culprits, the little dear rogues! I only wish I had them here, I would serve them out in multiplication ratio with the greatest pleasure! But it serves me well right for not having been on my guard, knowing this to be the old trick played off on greenhorns. But I hope no watch has been set at the door. The little dears do this sometimes, and are delighted to hear the consternation produced in the devoted victim; but never mind, all is joke at this festive season.” So, encouraging amiable thoughts, he again entered his bed, and commenced the journey of Somnus.

CHAPTER XIV.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood."

Goldsmith.

MISS RACHEL continued ill, getting worse, daily worse, so that it was deemed prudent to send for the doctor, the uncle of Miss Vine, who came without delay, and who, having seen the patient, pronounced her position critical; desired that she should be kept quiet as possible, and every encouragement given to sleep, without delay, as her illness had been occasioned by over-anxiety and excitement, which had now resulted in nervous fever, and which nothing but proper rest and quietness could alleviate. So promising to send a sedative, the doctor retired.

But the patient still grew worse. For a moment a slight glimmering of hope appeared, but which

was as speedily followed by a relapse, which discouraged the most sanguine well-wisher.

Molly, faithful Molly, was ever attentive, and night and day at intervals watched by the sick bed of her mistress; and ever and anon, as she beheld her sinking frame and sunken features, a genuine tear of sorrow would trickle down her weather-beaten countenance, proving that within that rough exterior deep and sympathetic feelings were fostered, equal to those of her most refined sister.

Tears may be characterized of many varieties, and are not always a true index to the mind. Some persons can scarcely speak without tears, or laugh without tears; they can, in fact, shed tears almost at will, as the crocodile, who is reported to eat her offspring, and then shed tears over them.

Molly's tears were not of this description; her tears were the true index to a softened heart; her tears to the recipient were tears worth having. "Yes," she would say to Betty in the kitchen, "poor missus was a little sharp over stupid Molly sometimes, but she was a good missus for all that. Nobody wanted anything when she was about; she was always after somebody or something. But I got it in my head that she fussed too much a deal, and am sore

afraid that if she don't mend soon, we shall have to take her where we took poor Sam the other day, poor soul ! I tell ye what, Betty, there never is one trouble without another follows hard on't. Laws now, and now I think on't, I heard a death-watch tick, tick away, all night long, close to my bed's head, only a week ago. I don't like them death-watches nohow ; they means no good, I knows. And at twelve o'clock the night afore last old Shepherd set up howling ; ay, mighty uneasy he was, poor fellow ; he saw more than we can see, I reckon. And last night a screeching owl flew over the house, just at the end where poor missus is lying so ill ; and yesterday as ever was, I saw three ravens in the Ten Acres, strutting away one afore the other, of all the world like a funeral party. And the boxes are all a-cracking, and the doors knocking ; all means something, I am sure it does, Betty. I knows more than you ; the gipsy made me quite perfect in these signs."

Betty stood aghast, attentively listening to Molly, when presently, lifting up her hands, burst forth, "Laws, Molly, don't ye go on so, or I shall be afraid to go up and down the house before long, that I shall now."

But Molly was an attentive and sympathizing nurse. She shook the bed, and beat the pillows

well up, taking care likewise to place the patient's head at the most comfortable elevation, and in the most tender and thoughtful manner, remarking, as she did so, "Now poor Miss Rachel will feel better, I hopes, poor soul."

"No, my good Molly," replied the sufferer; "I don't think I shall ever be better in this world. I feel I shall not be long in this changing scene. I feel I am getting weaker and weaker. Never mind, my good creature," observed the patient again, seeing that Molly was about to give way, "I would not speak so, but feel I should do so, that my death might not come too suddenly upon you. Molly, attend to my brother and his, as you have always been faithful to me."

"Laws, missus, don't ye say so, don't ye say so," said the servant, wiping her tears in her coarse apron; "we can't do without you, noways. Molly's well enough, maybe, to do all she can remember, but she wants missus to go before. Why, the few days you have been upstairs, we miss you dreadful; and old master walks up and down the house of all the world like a fish out of the water. I don't know, I am sure, what he would do, if he hadn't Master Thomas to talk to'n about the Indies and the alligators, and all that; and he's allis asking me to make some

gruel or arrow-root, or something, to have a stock, as he says, although I tells him your appetite is so awful bad."

"Yes," commenced the patient again; "but Molly, you have been here a long time, and can in some measure fill my place. Continue honest and sober, and do all you can to get the rest into the same good ways. Molly," said the patient again, "I should like some one to read to me; I can't read myself, I feel too ill. I should like some one to read the Bible to me; how short and passing is this life," she repeated. "I have spent what is considered a long life, yet what a vapour it appears to have been! I feel I have not read enough, and as I ought. I have not been so attentive as I ought; time has occupied my thoughts too much. I have been careful over many things—perishing things,—which now, when I want help, avail nothing. How prone is man," she continued, "to put off the all-important, the future, the unseen future, the never-ending future!" she quietly whispered. "Molly," called the patient again, "fetch my brother, fetch my brother; haste, be quick!"

As the farmer drew near the bed, the patient gazed steadfastly on him. "Brother," she commenced, "you must not be astonished or alarmed at what I am about to state, if my strength will permit me to do so."

As the farmer looked upon his sister, his face betrayed deep and strong emotion. He had been called upon a similar errand frequently before ; he saw it again, in all its deep and solemn reality. The tears, unbidden, arose from their fountains, and for a moment overflowed their channels.

"I have my forebodings, strong forebodings," continued the patient, "that time with me is short,—a span, a brittle thread ; but you will not vex nor grieve, but try and keep the people together, poor things ; and especially care for Molly, to whom, after my decease, you will find I have left ten pounds a year."

The farmer was quite overwhelmed by this intimation from his sister, and could not for some moments find words to reply ; but presently, recovering himself, commenced, "Rachie, dear Rachie, I find it hard to submit. I find it hard in this case to say, 'Thy will be done.'"

"But you will have strength given you for the day," returned his sister. "Thy will be done, thy will be done," she repeated.

"Amen," responded her brother. "Amen, amen," as he wiped the tears in his red pocket-handkerchief, nervously grasped in both hands. "Amen, amen."

"Brother," commenced the patient again, "I want some one to talk to me, to read to me, of

other things,—eternal things, not perishing things; not of time, but eternity; not the present, but the future,—the unseen future. I want some one to read the Book, the only book now worth hearing.”

“Right, quite right,” replied the farmer; “I will go at once, and get Miss Vine to come.”

“Yes, that will do; thank you, brother. I shall be happy to see her, very happy. I tell you, brother,” she continued, “I have done my best to attend to you and yours. I have done my duty, as they say, in this world; but how empty is it all! It renders me no comfort, no real satisfaction, now it is come to this.”

“Now, dear sister,” commenced the farmer, “that is just what Mr. Clearview says. All our works are worth nothing when we come to the dying hour. The truth is, we can do nothing for ourselves; it is Christ that has done it all; look to him, trust in him alone, sister; believe that he made a full and complete finish of the work he came to accomplish; trust in him alone for salvation. Ask him to send the Holy Spirit into your mind, that you may see and feel that all is right; go to him like the publican, go to him like the dying thief, go to him as a humble, penitent sinner, robbed of all self, and cast all hope upon his self-atonement; go with full faith

and confidence, and I know he will give all you desire,—

“He is able, he is willing;
Doubt no more.”

The Pharisees did mighty works. They kept the Sabbath, fasted twice in the week, fed the poor, clothed the naked, paid tithe, obtained the praise of man; but he called them a generation of vipers, poisonous vipers. Their works were not made to follow faith in Christ, or else all would have been well; but they imagined by their works to earn, to help out their own salvation. But they were miserably mistaken, for in so doing they were robbing Christ of his glory, in that he has done all in dying,—the just for the unjust. No, dear sister, works will never produce faith; but faith will produce works, acceptable in the sight of the Almighty. Works, without humbling faith, will only increase our pride, and make such doings hateful in the sight of heaven. Dear sister,” continued the farmer, “remember this, that he came not to all the righteous, the self-satisfied, but sinners, those who feel they want some one to rest upon beyond themselves; feel that, dear sister, and he will be all in all to you.”

“I will try, I will pray to believe.”

"Lord, help her unbelief!" responded the farmer.

"But think you, brother, that he will pardon all my neglect, all my sins?"

"Pardon you, dear sister? I am sure of it; for he declares by his prophet that he will. He invites all, and says, although your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"Yes, that is beautiful, encouraging, very encouraging; that will do, that will do," said the patient, and sank down again on her pillow.

"Laws, master," commenced Molly, as the farmer entered the kitchen, "why, if it ain't nearly six o'clock, and you ain't had one drop of tea. What an upset illness makes, to be sure! I think poor missus seems awful bad,—no appetite; as weak as an infant she gets, she does. I took her up a basin of gruel, but it was nearly all left; then there's the arrow-root all come down again. She doesn't take enough to keep body and soul together. I wish I could only get her to take more. If I could only make her well again, I would cook all day long for her, that I would now!"

"Ah, Molly!" returned the farmer, "I fear there is little hopes of her being any better in this world."

“Oh ! master, don’t ye say so ! What shall we do without Miss Rachel ? I am sure I don’t know. The Lord have mercy on us all !” said Molly.

“Yes, and so he will, if you say that in faith, and from your heart ;” and, inviting his nephew to sit down, commenced tea, after reminding Molly of a few delinquents, in the shape of a spoon, etc., forgotten by her in the general confusion.

Miss Vine was particular in her attentions to the sufferer ; she daily came, read and talked to her of the only important subjects welcome to a dying Christian, and had the satisfaction of seeing that as the body grew weaker it lost much of the dross of the world, and the gold became more and more refined. Miss Vine was particularly assiduous to read portions of the Scriptures that set forth most fully Christ’s love to sinners. “Be not afraid, my dear friend,” she said ; “think of this Scripture, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ See how easy it is, there is nothing more to do, or where should we be when we come to this ? It is all in Jesus,” she continued, “who loves the sinner, but hates his sins.”

“Yes,” said the patient, “I feel my sins heavy, very heavy.”

“Yes,” said Miss Vine, “but they will never destroy you if you repent and believe. Think of this, ‘Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ Believe that Christ’s blood cleanseth from all sin, if we have no presumptuous idea of helping by our own works.”

“I believe,” said the patient, “that Christ has died for the chief of sinners, and I feel more happy; in robust health, from a want of knowledge, I neglected the true salvation. I had some confidence in my works,—I entertained some idea of helping; but now I see that these self-made supports are useless to the sinner in the trying hour. They resemble the rotten props under the boughs of the apple-trees; when the rough winds blow they cleave asunder, and fall useless, useless. No, all is in Christ that died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession, and to him be all the glory of presenting the sinner spotless before his Father in the New Jerusalem.”

“Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,”

She repeated. “I have been anxious,” she commenced again, “about many things. I have attended my church, read the blessed Book, said the prayers,—but this is not salvation. Christ alone is salvation; Christ first, works last. The

first may be strictly done, and yet the sinner not saved ; undone, and the sinner saved even at the eleventh hour, as the thief, by a simple faith in the Lord Jesus."

The Rev. Mr. Clearview was likewise in constant attendance on the patient. He came with all the kindness a humble Christian, still feeling himself a poor sinner, but at the same time an honoured servant of Christ. He commenced in the most gentle and winning manner, so acceptable to a poor sufferer. He came, not with the sacramental emblems in one hand and a form of prayer in the other, as delusive passports to another world, but quietly drawing near the couch of the patient, endeavoured to discover if the same was an intelligent soul, with a full knowledge of the circumstances of the case. "How are you to-day, my dear friend?" he affectionately inquired. "I trust the pain of body is less than yesterday ; I hope you experienced a better night. I know your sufferings are great, but the Lord will not give more than is necessary to bear. We must remember it is only a phase of his love, for 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.' Take all, my dear friend, as a proof of his tender compassion to bring you to himself before leaving this changing scene for the bright and happy joys of heaven,

where pain and sorrow shall be no more felt, and tears are wiped from all faces."

"Yes, Sir," said the patient ; "I trust alone in Christ for salvation, all our works are as filthy rags."

"Bless God," said the minister ; "how happy now you make me !" his countenance at the same time beaming with joy, and his hoary locks resembling indeed a crown of glory. The minister felt as a good and faithful servant who understood his Lord's will ; he rejoiced that another witness was found giving glory to God, that another jewel was about to be added to his Master's crown.

"On this bed of sickness," said the patient, "he makes me feel more happy than when walking in strong health."

"Just so," rejoined the minister :

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

"It is Christ, my dear friend," he continued, "that is the rock, the support, the staff, when passing the Jordan to the happy Canaan. 'It is finished,' he said when hanging on the cross,—finished the great plan of salvation ; a glorious finish accomplished by him alone, and they who trust him shall never be confounded." Then, having read a chapter and psalm to the sufferer,

knelt down and offered a plain and fervent prayer to the throne of heaven in behalf of the patient.

The farmer awaited the minister at the foot of the stairs, in order to ascertain the state of his sister's mind. "Grieve not, nor vex, my brother," said the clergyman, "as one without hope, for she sees fully by the eye of faith the accomplished work of the Redeemer. He is her trust; he has revealed himself to her, she rests safely on him; and he will guide and uphold her safely through the valley and shadow of death, safe from every evil."

"The Lord's name be praised!" said the farmer. "Now I can spare her; now I will be resigned, and bless God for showing her the only true way of salvation."

"Yes," said Mr. Clearview, "the way is simple; only believe, only believe, farmer." So saying he took an affectionate leave of the farmer, and soon was engaged in other duties.

"That won't do, I tell ye," said Molly, as she stirred the arrow-root for Miss Rachel. "I tell ye, Jack, you mustn't make so much noise; poor missus is awful bad, and I am terribly afraid we soon shall have to take her up where poor Sam is, poor soul! The pa'son and Miss Vine have been both reading and talking to her about the blessed country; and that's a sign I 'spects, that she'll never come down again until she is carried. I tell

you, don't keep whistling there in that unfeeling manner; you don't know how bad missus is; always so kind to you, too, allis lent you the drab great-coat when you were out late in the snow with the osses, and allis had a good fire and something warm for ye when ye came from market. I can't think how folks can be so wanting in common gratitude. When I think on her, how I shall see her empty seat, her empty bed; when I think I shall never hear her voice again,—why I shall stand it nohow," and Molly wiped her eyes with her apron. "I feels awful sorry about Miss Rachel, I do," she repeated. "Silence, Betty," she called out again; "I tell you you needn't be saying anything about Miss Vine; she's a nice, kind lady; very kind to poor folks; and allis says, 'Please Molly,' and 'Thank you, Molly,'—so nice like, that it quite makes my old heart feel different, it does; and when she leaves off talking to poor missus, talks to me about Christ, and all that. Laws, it is so beautiful to hear a young lady go on so that I think if I was a young lady I would be like Miss Vine, and not like most of them,—dressing up to the skies, and going to all the balls, fairs, and the likes, but never thinking of poor souls, and Molly;" and away went the nurse upstairs with the arrow-root.

"Molly, Molly," called Miss Rachel, in a very faint voice, as the servant entered, "I feel ill; worse, much worse; call my brother and nephew."

When the gentlemen entered, Miss Vine was sitting close to the patient's bed, resembling much, indeed, a ministering angel, as she talked, read, and did everything in her power to soothe the sufferer, and to whom Mr. Thomas Brunt made a low and respectful bow, at the same time advancing towards her, shook her cordially by the hand; and thanked her for her great kindness and watchful regard to his aunt during the hours of painful trial.

"Yes, Sir," she replied, a slight colour at the same time tinging her cheeks, "we are not sent into the world to be selfish, we are not born for ourselves alone, but to sympathize with and help each other."

On looking towards the bed, Tom beheld the patient's eyes benevolently fixed upon him, and turning to her said, "And how is dear aunty now?"

"Worse, worse," she replied, quietly shaking her head; "worse in body, my dear nephew, but better in mind."

"Dear brother," she commenced, addressing the farmer, "I sent for you, being about to leave this world. I seem to think now that time is very short with me; but don't vex or grieve. I

am going to be better off. I am going where the wicked cease from troubling ; where the weary are for ever at rest. You must keep up, and keep the home together ; but remember Christ is all, all is in Christ,—

“He can alone our souls supply,
And give us courage when we die.”

My dear nephew,” she commenced, addressing Mr. Thomas Brunt, “you are young ; you may have a long life before you ; you have seen much of God’s providence abroad on the mighty deep ; you believe that he is ; you must believe in his son, Jesus Christ, and then all will be well.”

“Yes, dear aunty,” said Tom ; “I believe that he has sustained you in these trying moments.”

“Yes, glory be to his holy name ! he is faithful to his promise,” said the patient. “No, he never leaves nor forsakes them that are his. Now, my dear nephew, promise me that you will remain with your uncle,—you will be a comfort and great assistance to him.”

“My dear aunty,” replied Tom, “under such painful circumstances, I shall consider it a duty to remain some time with my uncle.”

“That’s right ; that will do, that will do,” said the sufferer ; and again fell into a drowsy swoon.

Tom and the farmer left the room, leaving only

the attentive Miss Vine assiduously watching the bedside of the patient.

The doctor having called, the farmer required from him a candid opinion respecting his sister.

“Prepare yourself for the worst, farmer,” he replied; “the end is at hand; the system is nearly worn out,—it might be a week, an hour, a minute; but come it must, and that very soon.”

Scarcely had the doctor left, when Miss Vine was heard calling loudly for the family to join her in the bedroom, the last moments having arrived; but on entering all was over. Peaceful and calm the remains of the once active Miss Rachel lay, as if in a calm sleep; and so it was, the sleep of death: but the soul had joined the mighty company of angels and peoples and nations.

And now at the farm, after the first shock had passed in some degree over, the inmates were, as is usually the case under such circumstances, busily thinking of the funeral obsequies of Miss Rachel,—Miss Vine, of course, having undertaken the shopping, etc., in the absence of any other female friend.

“Yes,” said Molly, as she spoke to Betty in the kitchen, “I knew it would be so; when they must go, they must go, and nothing will stop

them—doctors, pa'sons, gruel, and arrow-root; all, all, no account. I hoped though that she wouldn't go just yet. I gave the medicine proper all the night long; but after all she slipped away from us, and is gone to glory, somewhere up in the sky; in the sun it is, I reckon."

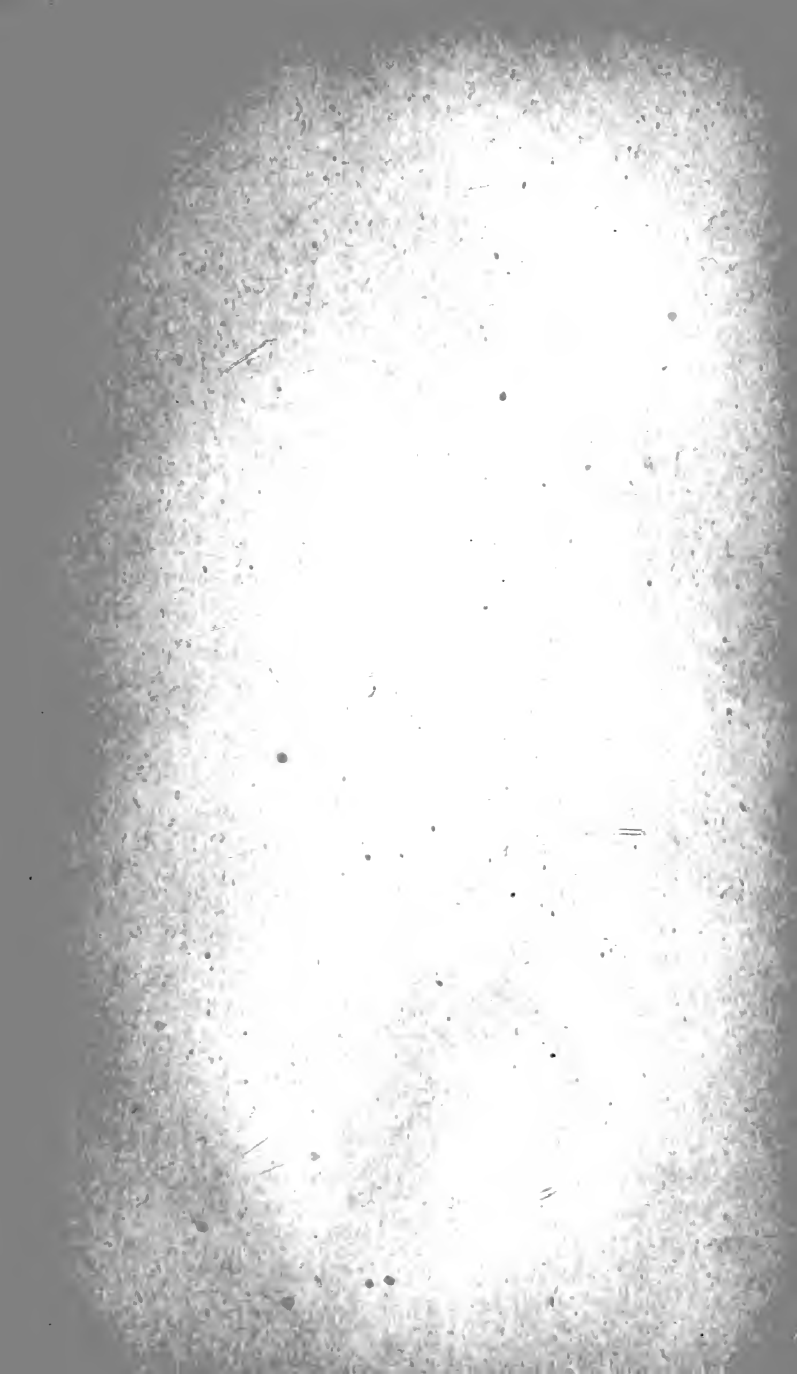
"Yes, I said so, Betty," she continued; "them death-watches and shepherds howling meant no good. I knew it would be so; I knew as well as if the undertaker and all his men had been here, I did; for last night a coffin jumped clean out of the fire, right on to the rug. I looked at it; no, it was no pretty purse, but a doleful, doleful coffin. I remember, too, before that poor chap Sam died, one jumped clean into my lap. I hopes it will be a long time before I sees any more of them black conjurers, I do now."

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